GODFREY MALVERN;

OR,

THE LIFE OF AN AUTHOR.

BY

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COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

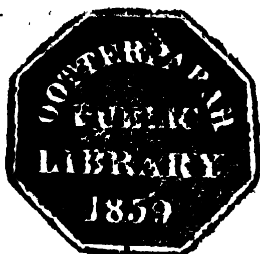
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TO THE READER.

"To draw only Virtuous characters in this age, is to write unnaturally,—to be classed among the many good-meaning, milk-and-water Authors, who, like the aforesaid beverage, do neither good nor harm. To take up a strong pen, and paint only Vice, in all its dark and hideous colours, is to add our name to the great Muster-roll of Crime—to be branded as an associate of thieves, blackguards, and black-legs, and become a byword among all sects of the saintly and the sanctified. One course only remains open,—to take the 'mingled colours of good and evil,' and to pourtray human nature as it exists—to respect and reverence Virtue, even when found in the haunts of beggars—and to attack, without fear, the Vice, Cant, and Humbug, which too often, under the Mask of Virtue, seeks to undermine and destroy everything good, honest, upright, manly, and English. This is the course we have attempted to pursue, unchecked by either the frowns of friends, or the threats of enemies."—GODFREY MALVERN, pp. 255.



GODFREY MALVERN.

CHAPTER I.

CHAPTER THE FIRST INTRODUCES OUR HERO TO THE READER, AND OPENS WITH A VERY HOMELY BUT VERY NECESSARY DIALOGUE.

WITHIN a country churchyard, which stood upon the gentle slope of a green hill-side,—its summit crowned with a grey, old, and weather-beaten church,—stood a young man dressed in deep mourning; his forehead half buried in the palm of his hand, while his elbow rested on the top of a tall gravestone. The tombstone was partly covered with a rich, short, orange-coloured lichen, such as is often seen on old ruins, or giving an additional beauty to the picturesque in landscape scenery. In the present instance, however, it was fast obliterating the workmanship of some forgotten village-sculpture, and already half concealed a very plump cherub, who with wings placed cross wise on his breast, and huge swollen cheeks, seemed endeavouring in vain to blow away the destructive creepers which were rapidly overgrowing both himself and his stony trumpet. As for the "poor inhabitant below," not a letter was visible to tell of either his name or his age; and a grim death's-head, that stood grinning from a neighbouring gravestone—as if it had long watched the slow working of decay,—now seemed to gaze in triumph at the victory which Time had once more obtained over Human Vanity.

The young stranger who occupied the centre of this little city of the dead, might, at a distance, have passed for some gloomy statue of Grief, so fixed and motionless did he remain. The grey-headed sexton, was busied in smoothing the little summit of a newly-made grave, which had but a short hour before received its cold inhabitant, and paused from time to time, as he rested upon his spade, to gaze upon that

motionless mourner. But the stranger moved not; he seemed to stand as regardless of what was passing around him, as the corpse which had just been interred at his feet; for the "pat, pat" of the grave-digger's spade, appeared to affect him no more than it did the silent sleeper, who now reposed unconsciously beneath that brown, grassless hillock.

The young man heard not the laughter of the children who were playing at horses with the coffin-ropes, and prancing thoughtlessly over the graves of their forefathers. The continued "hack, hack" of the sturdy urchin, who had walked off with the sexton's pickaxe, and was whistling merrily while hewing away at a rude figure of Time—making huge holes in his glass as if the sand wasted not fast enough—was disregarded by the mourner. He stood there, almost without a friend in the wide world. That grave had closed over the remains of his father. Now he had no one to care for him—no home to return to—no friend whom he knew, to breathe a word of comfort in his ear; he stood homeless "amid a thousand homes"—a stranger in the midst of strangers, for no one there knew Godfrey Malvern.

At length the sexton, having finished the grave "to his mind," and (unperceived by the young stranger,) made his best bow, by way of return for the unusual fees he had received, departed to put away his coffin-ropes, spade, and other implements of death, in the same dark crypt where his predecessors had placed them before him for many a bygone year. He then gathered up some remains of old coffins, and tying them together, placed them under his arm, to take home, and burn; and driving out the noisy children before him, quitted the churchyard.

The old man paused a few moments at the churchyard-gate, holding the bunch of rusty keys in his hand, as if hesitating whether or not to lock up for the night, and leave the young man to get out by climbing the low moss-covered wall. But inured as he was to the trade of death, he felt a strange, new sensation, something like pity, pleading in favour of the mourner; so resolved to leave his fire-wood at home, and after having had his customary pint and pipe at the Old Brown Cow, come again and lock up the gates at dusk.

"Poor young gentleman!" muttered the old man to himself, as his bent figure glided without the churchyard-wall,—that wall which enclosed the many dark tenements his own hands had made in forty long years: "I feel very sorry for him, for he's payed me like a prince,—very sorry indeed—and I wish I'd only such a good job once every week. It was very shocking, and very sudden, but he must

have died some day or other, and happen some other sexton might have had the job, and felt no pity for him at all, so it's all for the best. Hey, well-a-day! we mun all die some time or other; it's the course of natur, as my old woman used to say, and she led me a terrible life." So the old man went on his way, hesitating whether or not to have his pint of ale, as usual, or to treat himself "for once and away," with a glass of grog, after so good a day's work.

Facing the low and rough-hewn stone wall which divided the churchyard from the high road, stood a row of thatched cottages, their fronts overlooking the burial-ground, from the opposite ascent. Before these white-washed and picturesque dwellings, a green sward went sloping down to the road-side, from which it was divided by a low square-clipped hedge, and a little water-course, that went brawling into the Beck of a distant valley. The stream was crossed by a rude-barked beam of wood, called by the inhabitants "the brigg." On this green the cottage-children were playing, and their noise had become at last so obstreperous as to bring out a woman, who came from the door with her knitting in her hand, and calling to one of her boys, said "Hush, Billy, how can you blate after that fashion, when you see the young gentleman still stands crying in the grave-ground? Come in, you little limb, or I'll break every bone in your body; I believe you would hev your rant out, if your own father was laid out stiff and stark up stairs. Come in, or I'll fetch you with a rattle to your heels, that I will."

"That's right, Mrs. Crooks," exclaimed her neighbour, as she came out from the adjoining door, giving her own sun-burnt boy such a thump on the back, as sent him stumbling and bellowing over the threshold. "I've called to my little brute until I'm as hoarse as an old crow; and he tecks no more notice of me than a stone. But I'll break his back before I sleep, if the Lord spares me. I'm sure I could hardlings tell whether I were spinning or not, only for feeling the flax slip through my fingers as it came off the rock: they made such a ran-tan of a din, enough to deafen the dead. Poor dear young gentleman!" added she, changing her tone and looking towards the churchyard, "he stands yonder yet, moping like a hen at moulting-time. God help us all!—it was a shocking death, to be tossed up like a shuttle-cock, one moment alive and well, and to come down the next, so mauled, that the mother who bore him, had she been alive, wouldn't hev known her own again."

"Very shocking indeed," replied her neighbour; "it 'ell be a warning

to me never to trust mysen on board a steam-packet again the longest day I hev to live. Abraham Clark said he heard the explosion in White-Owl-Wood, though he was felling a large tree at the very same time. He declares it was just like thunder. And them as were there, say the poor dead gentleman went clean out of sight, and I dare say it's true enough, for they couldn't see for the smoke and the smother when the boiler bursted."

"These are very shocking times, neighbour," answered her gossip. "I never heard of so many accidents. My John says,—an he's very 'cute—that the country's ower thickly stocked, and that the great men in Lunnun pay the railways and steam-boats, so much for everybody they kill: and that it comes cheaper in the end than emigrating 'em to foreign parts abroad. Marry, I hardly know what to think; but what wi' these new poor-laws pinching 'em one way, and the railroads killing 'em another, I think there will be nobody left soon, but such stay-at-home bodies as you and me."

"I don't know whatever they mean doing with us," said Mrs. Crooks: "flour's risen twopence a stone this week, and our miller says it 'ell be higher yet;" then looking towards the churchyard, she added, "Poor young man! he stands there yet. I went down to the Brown Cow this afternoon, for a gill of ale, for I made but a poor dinner, and Mrs. Tomlinson says he's hardling eaten the weight of an ounce since his father was killed. And that when she said to the young gentleman, (she's a very feeling woman, though she wont trust anybody,) as it would be shocking news to take home to his mother, that he sighed as if his heart would break, and said, 'I have no mother that I know of—nor no home now;' I'm sure the tear stood in her eye when she telled me, and he said—'nor no home now.' Poor young man!"

"And happen no money much, nor no trade at his finger-ends to addle (earn) any;" replied the other. "I feel very sorry when any of your bettermost-sort of folk come down in the world, because you see it goes harder with them, than it does with the like of us. I'm sure I would give him a bed, if he wouldn't mind sleeping wi' our Jack; but happen he's not used to a chaff-bed and a sacking tick, and Jack's a terrible kicker in his sleep; and chaff breeds a many fleas, and my good man snores dreadfully; and we hev only one bedstead which we sleep on 'weresens, (ourselves) and Jack says the rattons (rats) run over him, and when it rains it comes in where he sleeps, so he wouldn't hev over much comfort. But I mun be off and put my greens in the pot, else when

my old man comes home to his supper, all the fat 'ell be in th' fire." So separated the two gossips.

Unconscious that he had been the subject of the above conversation and too dejected to look beyond the cause of his present misery, Godfrey Malvern still remained in the churchyard. He had by this time seated himself on a large square tombstone, which marked the ostentatious vault wherein slept the Village Esquires of many generations; and the last ruddy flush of a calm summer sunset, which lit up the tranquil green hill-side, and shed a golden glow over the old grey, picturesque church, seemed now to arrest his attention.

It was indeed a beautiful and solemn scene, if aught may be called beautiful which is so closely allied to a future state—which seems only akin to death and heaven: for no thought of future misery jostles the calm tranquillity of the mind, when meditating in so holy a place. The imagination leaps from the grave to God, while Hope stands before the dark entrance of the tomb, and by the hallowed radiance of her own pure light, outshines the shadowy record of all past misdeeds.—We wash out all evil remembrance of the dead with the tears we shed upon their graves; for true sorrow blotteth out all transgressions.

So thought Godfrey Malvern while he sat beside his father's grave, and forgot how long that father had neglected him, how cold and stern was his look, when he at last fetched him from school; and Godfrey's heart sank within him when he thought over his own past thoughts. He looked on the old church: how calm and solemn it seemed: its low ancient porch half-buried under huge masses of ivy, which concealed many a rent that Time had made; many a quaint and hideous head—which had stood out as if in grim mockery of the sacred edifice. Clear and bright rose the tall spire in the still sunset, wearing something like a "sad smile," as it looked upon the bed of green graves below. The bridal couches of Death, the end of marriage, birth, and burial, over which the bells still pealed at intervals, without making a single heart that slept there, either merry, or sad; for all below was hushed:—

"Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet slept."

But we must pass from the dead to the living,—for even so life passes; dead and living but fill up each other's places; they tread in the self-same footpaths at last; palace and cottage alike send their inhabitants to the grave—a blot from the ink of death, and, like the falling hat of the inimitable Corporal Trim, "we are gone in a moment."

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH GREGORY GRUFF MAKES HIS APPEARANCE—AND THE OLD PARSON IS RATHER PROSY,—AND HOW A MAN WHO DOES ALL THINGS FOR THE BEST, IS SOMETIMES THANKED.

ONE end of the rural cemetery we have so imperfectly described was skirted by a hawthorn-hedge, in the centre of which stood a neat green gate, opening upon the grounds of the Parsonage. From this very gate issued the two characters whom we are now about to introduce to our readers, namely the worthy Rector of the village, and his friend Gregory Gruff.

"Always bringing one to meditate among the tombs," was the first sentence uttered by Gruff as the gate swung creaking behind him.—"Now, were I you, I would have one-half of these new grave-stones broken up to mend the roads with. They are mockeries, my friend, mere mockeries, and only fit to be trampled under foot by man and beast."

"Why so?" inquired the clergyman, giving his cynical friend an encouraging glance to proceed.

"Why so?" replied Gruff; "what need to question so clear a matter? Do but look around, and you are answered. Here—only here," added he, striking a gravestone with his cane. "Read this: 'To the Memory of an affectionate Wife and tender Mother: One whose equal will be looked for in vain'—bah! This very fellow married his great fat cook within three months after his wife's death. Fah! I could brain the brute with the tombstone he has erected."

"Well! well! pass we over the frailties of the living," said the kind-hearted clergyman: "here lie the dead, whom both you and I must one day join. Turn we to those."

"With the dead I meddle not," replied Gruff, shaking his head.—"Were I to do so, look here! This stone is fresh from the mason's hands. Three months ago I saw the two brothers fighting. The dead," added he, touching the gravestone, "was opposed to the living. I care not for your coroner's inquest," continued he, "that fight caused his death!" and he again struck the stone. "And now read, 'To the Memory of a beloved Brother, this tribute is erected by one who'—ah!

the words choke me!—by one who fought him when living, who gave him blows and bad brandy, and now enjoys his property."

"Hush! say no more," answered the worthy clergyman, placing his hand familiarly on his friend's shoulder. "In your walks through this green and beautiful world, you seem to delight only in gathering thorns and thistles; and would fain (did we not know better) make us believe that you have no love for the sweet wayside flowers which strew and beautify the rugged pathways of this life. And yet at night you could not sleep unless you had thrown away your bundle of weeds, and placed the sweeter flowers beneath your pillow. Come, come, night is now fast approaching; shake off these blighted buds, and open the fairer flowers; become again the evening primrose, which my niece delights to call you when in your gentler moods. Give me your arm," added he, pointing to where Godfrey Malvern still sat unconscious of their presence.—"Let us approach and offer comfort to yonder young stranger. Become what you really are—the Good Samaritan, and pour oil upon his wounds. The grave, you well know how suddenly, how awfully, has closed over the remains of his father. Let us succour and comfort him, as becomes all good christians to console the unhappy."

"Well, well, come along then," said his surly friend, now dragging the old clergyman on. "He is young, and looks very sorrowful, and so do all your young mourners. But I have lived to see your craped and hooded widow wear her second-mourning at the end of a month, and before a third expired, don her new bridal robes; almost before the echo of her husband's funeral bell had ceased to haunt my ear, have I been dinned with the merry ringing of her marriage peal. But come along—perhaps he is poor, and deeply troubled, and as you say it is our duty to help him, though I have no hopes! no hopes! and yet—But come along! he sees us, and is hastening away."

But before proceeding further, we must pause to make our readers better acquainted with the character of Gregory Gruff; for although an oddity and an original, he was at the bottom one of the truly good-hearted. No weathercock, however, changed oftener within twelve hours, than did Gregory. Every day was he starting some new hobby, and at times he had a dozen of these Uncle-Tobyisms ready saddled at once, and mounted whichever his whim-of-the-moment selected. But the week before, he had forsworn all animal food, and now patronised the growers of great gooseberries, ponderous potatoes, cabbages, turnips, &c.,—had given up reading everything, save pastoral poetry,—had mounted a green coat, and struck out the cattle from a rich landscape by

Gainsborough,—argued that crimes of all denominations arise from eating animal food, and grounded his reasons upon the very food itself first springing from murder,—talked of making laws for hanging butchers, and transporting sportsmen,—rearing poultry only for their eggs, cows for their milk, and sheep for their wool. Pigs he would have annihilated. This was his last new hobby; an older one, and one which never forsook him, was his belief in nativities. He had met with some travelling impostor, who for ten guineas had "cast his planet;"—had foretold all that would happen during his life. This, Gruff by great exertion contrived to fulfil:—he looked at the scroll every morning, and by night so managed matters as to make it come true to the very letter. If he were to quarrel with a friend, or change his residence, or meet a stranger, or hear sudden news, or lose money, all was sure to be done as foretold; for the impostor was a wag in his way, and had chalked out for Gregory work enough. Then his motto was "Never remain idle," and the mischief he got into merely to keep himself fully employed, was truly wonderful. He was as crusty as old port, and in every way as warm and good. His whole life seemed spent in quarrelling and making it up,—in grumbling and doing good, and in abusing men to make them better: if he could find no fault he made one. He cut a hole in an old coat, merely for the love of disputing the damage done; then ended by buying the wearer a new one. Added to this, he was rich, a bachelor, and the true friend of the poor. But we must leave his character to develope itself in these pages, as we work out the busy incidents of "our strange eventful history."

The good old clergyman was the first to salute the young stranger; and there was something so kind and sincere in his manner, that Godfrey accepted without hesitation the proffered hand, and returned its warm pressure in silence.

"My dear young friend," said the clergyman, "you will, I know, pardon the intrusion of an old man,—of one who, like myself, sincerely sympathises with your sufferings. Sorrow and I, my dear friend, have long been acquainted with each other; and I come not to preach comfort, but resignation, for I would neither wish to see you glad, nor cheerful, after such a solemn event as has lately befallen you. But I speak from experience when I say that solitude is but a sorry comforter; for the mind then, like the mourners of old, buries itself in a black mantle, and but deepens the surrounding gloom. I know how hard it is to subscribe to the doctrine of the good old heathen philosopher Epictetus, who tells us that we ought not to mourn for the dead, but rather to

consider that we have but restored again, what for a time was lent to us. Still I have lived long enough to look upon every dispensation of Providence without a murmur; although I yet sorrow for the dead. I have seen both wife and child borne over my threshold," continued the kind-hearted old man, while the tear gathered in his eye, as he still retained the young stranger's hand. "They now sleep in this still churchyard; not one is left behind to comfort or succour me in my old age. I have but one Comforter now;"—and he turned his eyes heavenward as he spoke, then added,—"but they have only left their home a little while before me; they have but preceded me in the long journey; and I shall come like a traveller in the night, who, however dark or stormy may have been his journey, at last enters the silent inn, and without making any alarm, or breaking their deep sleep, steals in silently, and slumbers beside them, although they know not that he is there. Death rides but a day's journey before the living, and he will not fail to await us when he draws near to the last stage."

"Much of that might have been saved until Sunday," said Gruff, breaking up the discourse without ceremony; "and your sermon have been all the better for it. I thought you intended to ask the young man in, and offer him a home for a few days, if he would accept it. If you mean it, why not say so at once? If you don't, I'll take him to my lodgings, and there he may stay until he's tired of me—and welcome."

"But you shall neither take him nor yourself to your lodgings again, without my leave," said a woman, who, unperceived, had joined the group, and given so unexpected a turn to the conversation. "Oh! Parson Preedom! Parson Preedom!" added she, turning to the clergyman, "how ever could you recommend such a harum-skarum, Tom-o-Bedlam sort of a lodger to a poor lone woman like me? I'm sure I pay my tithes, and my church-rates, and my highway-dues same as I did when my poor dear husband was alive; and how ever your Reverence could think of turning a madman into my house, when I never did you no mander (manner) of harm, I can't conceive."

"Well, my good woman, what's the matter?" inquired the honest clergyman; "I know my friend here has many odd ways of his own, but still I believe you will find in the end that you never had so good a lodger."

"The woman's mad," murmured Gruff, speaking as if to himself,—"mad as a March-hare. But I knew I should meet a stranger and have a quarrel with somebody before the day was over, though I did not

reckon upon changing my lodgings so soon. But she's at me again. What the devil can I have done, I wonder?"

"A good lodger!" exclaimed the woman, without regarding the commentary of Gruff,—"marry an' he were to stay with me much longer, I should have to look out for lodgings for myself. I'm sure he's never happy unless he's in mischief. I don't go behind your back, Mr. Gruff, to say it;—but, the very first day you went into my garden, you cut down nearly the whole of my grape-vine, and scarcely left a branch on any of my prime gooseberry bushes. As to my pear, apple, and cherry trees, he hardlings left anything standing but their stumps; and when I complained, he had the impudence to tell me to my face, that they would be all the better for it in a few more years:—when the Lord only knows whether I shall live to see another or not."

"So they will," said Gruff: "never saw trees that wanted pruning so bad in all my life; and this is all the thanks I get for saving you the expense of a gardener. But women are all alike;—the more we study for their good, the more they grumble."

"Well then, what excuse can you make for filling my room with soot, and half suffocating me?" continued the woman. "Oh! your Reverence, if you had but seen the mess he made me, as he stood in his shirt-sleeves, sweeping the chimney with my long broom, you would never have forgotten it. I could have written my name on the tables, and chairs, and drawers, and mantle-piece. They were covered so thick with soot, you never saw such a sight in your life; and when I grumbled, he called me an old —— I can't tell your Reverence what; only, it was what they call a dog, by another name."

"Your room smoked bad enough to stifle Satan himself," replied Gruff, "and the soot came thundering down like a cluster of imps. If my toast stood before the fire five minutes, it was as black as if twenty devils had been dancing a reel on it. I did it to save you the expense of a sweep."

"Then you must unrip my best feather-bed," proceeded the woman, "making my chamber worse than a poulterer's shop, and covering every thing with down and dust, as bad or worse than you did the parlour with soot."

"It had never been half-made," answered Gruff. "It had not been shaken up for six months: the feathers were all in lumps, hard as bricks, and heavy as lead. I never slept a wink the first night. You are a dirty, lazy old woman; and I'll leave you to-morrow I knew I should have to remove."

"And my best mahogany chairs," continued the hostess: "that day I went to see poor Patty Linten, when she was so bad, and your Reverence prayed beside her. Yes, that day, Mr. Gruff, did you go to the wheelwright's shop, and buy a pot of green paint, and you made my chairs such beasts as never were seen; and if it hed'nt been for the bright polish on 'em, I should never have got the paint off. I would sooner live on bread and water than have my things spoilt so,—that I would."

"You may go to the —:" and Gruff finished the sentence in thought, as he turned away, and seated himself on a tombstone, beyond hearing of his angry hostess.

There was something so comic in the angry countenance of Gruff, and such earnestness in the manner of the widow, as she brought charge after charge against her lodger, that even Godfrey Malvern, sad as he was, could not forbear smiling. After a long parley, the worthy clergyman so far pacified the hostess, that she consented to give her lodger another week's trial, vowing, however, that if he was no better, he should go, if she had to "scald him out." And go he did before the expiration of the week.

The clergyman then took hold of the young man's arm, and as they proceeded towards the parsonage house, said, "My worthy friend Gruff will join us at the tea-table; but, were I to return now, and press him to come in, in his present mood, he would likely enough say, 'I shall not,' and hasten home. He is a strange character, and always getting into some scrape or another, through his good intentions."

CHAPTER III.

OUR HISTORY ADVANCES ANOTHER STRIDE, AND THE READER BEGINS TO SEE THAT HE IS ENVELOPED IN A PROFOUND MYSTERY.

TURN we for a few moments to where Gregory Gruff was seated on the gravestone, growling at his landlady. "I'll build myself a house; then I shall have a little peace," said Gruff to himself. "I'll have a lot of little boxes made and labelled, in which both to receive things, and leave my orders in writing;—while one room's cleaned I'll go into another, never by any chance allowing a woman to be in my presence.

If this doesn't answer, I'll do my own washing, be my own cook, clean my own house: it will keep me out of mischief, and I shall have no one to quarrel with. My horoscope tells me I must one day prepare myself for a great change, and this must be it." Then, his thoughts wandering instantly to his old friend, the clergyman, he added, "And he talks of death, as if it had not saved him a deal of trouble; and raves about his children, as if they would have been anything but plagues to him all his life. There was Jack, who died when he was about ten,—that lad would either have been a pirate or a smuggler, and in the end either hung or shot; for he was always making boats, or reading Robinson Crusoe, and as fond of dabbling in the river as a water-dog. The old man has been spared much misery. And Bill, such a rogue for playing with fire, making cannons of keys, and laying out every penny he could get in gunpowder; he would have run away and enlisted for a soldier, if he hadn't been hung for firing a stack-yard, or heading the incendiaries. But they were both nice lads," said he, with a sigh, "and I felt their loss deeply."

So he ran on through the whole of the deceased family. One daughter he married to a gipsy, for no other reason than that she was fond of wandering alone in the woods. Another he consigned to a mad-house, because she was fond of books, kindly finishing the sentence by adding, "She was the very image of her father, and he's half-cracked, through reading about Saxons and Normans, Danes and devils, Monks and Monasteries, and such like rubbish."

After a time his mind settled down into a sterner mood, as he thought of the dead who slept around him; but still there mingled even with his graver soliloquies a portion of that biting humour which formed so prominent a part of his character. "And what have we here," said he, "but worn-out miseries, broken friendships, pride prostrated, greatness overthrown by death; youth cut off untimely, as their friends always think; kind hearts never valued until they have crumbled to dust?" (and he sighed as he thought of himself.) "Here all law-suits have their ending; and he who made so many struggles to gain his large estate, is now left to the same quiet possession of six feet of common earth, as he who had never before a foot of mould to call his own. Here the pauper at last finds a peaceful parish; the overseer can remove him no further; the boundary of death admits of no disputes: the poor houseless orphan sleeps here undisturbed. Here the beggar is as rich as he who refused him a mouthful of bread, for here the small and the great sleep together. All hopes and fears, all doubts and

misgivings, have here their ending. The debtor fears his creditor no more; rivals in love and ambition, friends and foes, sleep tranquilly side by side; for in the grave end all earthly happiness and human misery. The quarrelsome landlady is here quiet, and hath no more trouble with her guests.—But I begin to want my tea, and Parson Preedom never invited me in. I've a good mind to return to my lodgings,—his niece uses so much of that nasty cheap black tea. Why can't they drink green? Green is nature's own colour. All things ought to be green. I think, of all the miseries of this life, bad tea is one of the greatest. Death comes in the course of nature; it is but what we must expect some time or another, for all must die; but bad tea is a thing that may be prevented,—it is a misery which others bring to us. But I'll tell her of it some day or other. It may cause me to quarrel with my best and oldest friend, but I cannot help it. What is to be will be—and so I'll go to my tea. And that's as good poetry as some of them write in the present day, for there is sense in it."

So saying, he took up his cane, and hurried off to join the parson at the tea-table, grumbling all the way he went at black tea, and wishing every ship might sink (if the crew were but spared) that came laden with such a cargo for England.

When Gruff entered, he found Godfrey Malvern already seated at the tea-table, together with the clergyman, his niece, and another young lady, who was introduced as Miss Emma Ingledew, the daughter of a neighbouring gentleman, who prefixed Esquire to his name. But we must pass by the ceremony of the table, etc., the wry faces Gruff made while swallowing his black draught, and hasten to the conversation which followed when the tray was withdrawn.

Old men are allowed certain privileges, which the young are not, and among others are those of asking questions, and giving advice. In the young (especially strangers) such things are considered impertinent; they do not understand the art by which the elder ingratiate themselves into our confidence. There seems more of sincerity and less of design in the way in which the old manage these matters; for their age, and their knowledge of the world, must, in some manner, command our respect.

"You spoke but now," said the worthy clergyman, addressing Godfrey, "as if you intended making but short stay in this neighbourhood, nor would I persuade you otherwise, if the sensations awakened by the late unfortunate event are too painful to bear. But hearing

you express your admiration of the beautiful scenery which surrounds us, I would fain make you better acquainted with it before you depart, that is, if a few days' delay would not impede your more important business."

Godfrey thanked the old man for his kindness, in such a manner as showed how sincerely he felt it; then, added, while a tear gathered in his eye,—"I have no business of importance, and am at present undecided as to where I shall go from hence. What my father's intentions were I knew not, nor can I know now; all places are alike to me." There was something so marked and melancholy in the manner of the speaker as he uttered this last sentence, that it drew forth sighs from the bosoms of his hearers, and caused them to sit for several moments in silence, which was at last broken by the clergyman, saying—

"But, surely your father must have brought you up with an eye to some profession, which he intended you to follow, unless his circumstances were such as led him to conclude that you required none?"

"He might," answered Godfrey, briefly; "I was for the first time returning from school, where I had been employed for the last two years, as usher. I had but seen him twice in ten years. I believe it was his intention to have taken me to London, but for what purpose I know not."

The old man then enquired where he came from, and was much pleased to find that the schoolmaster with whom Godfrey Malvern had spent so much of his life, had been the companion of his own early years.

"I've settled it all in my own mind," said Gregory Gruff, who had hitherto remained silent. "I told you we should have a stranger come to live amongst us, and this is him. We want a schoolmaster, and he shall be elected. I'll set about canvassing for votes in the morning. He shall live with me, and we'll teach the children what they ought to learn. We'll burn all their books, and begin a new system of education. My horoscope told me I should see a great change, and it's come. We'll have a sand-glass; it will save slates and pencils, books and pens.—You'll vote for him for one," added he, looking at the clergyman, "and you, Miss Ingledew, will, I know, get your father to use his influence." The young lady looked at Godfrey, blushed, and then promised to do her utmost.

"But," said the clergyman, "we must first see if—"

"We will have no buts and ifs in the case," answered Gruff. "If

the young man consents, that's enough. You can write to your old friend, the schoolmaster, about him, and that's all you need to do; leave the rest to me. I'll call on Farmer Jenkinson, Garland, Page, Metcalf, and Harrison, to-night, and the thing will be as good as done,"—and out he went without waiting to bid the company good night.

It would but weary the reader were we to record the conversation which took place between Godfrey Malvern and the clergyman; suffice it that the young man consented to turn Village Schoolmaster, providing he was elected, and to become the parson's guest until the contest was decided.

But we must change our scene, to a more ostentatious apartment, in which was seated Squire Ingledew, busied in looking over a bundle of papers, at the time his beautiful daughter returned from the parsonage.

"You are late, my love," said the purse-proud squire, half raising his head as his daughter entered the room; "you seem to take more pleasure in the company you meet with at the parson's than you do in mine."

"Say not so, my dear father," answered Emma, approaching him, as if to throw her arms around his neck, while he put out his hand, and allowed her to retain it a moment, but in such a way that the action seemed to forbid any further familiarity. "I should not have staid so late, only old Mr. Gruff came in, and" (she would have made mention of Godfrey Malvern, but checked herself; for she well knew how great an objection her father had to her meeting with strangers,)—"and you know how it amuses me to hear him find fault with everybody, and every thing, when I know at the same time there is not a kinder-hearted creature living."

"I know you say so," replied her father, "and believe you speak as you really think. But you are a mere child, and know but little of the world. For my part, I wish you met with him less than you do. He is not a fitting companion for a young lady: I mean one like yourself, who is independent of the world, and the world's opinions. Not that I have any dislike to the man. But he seems to me, to take too much pleasure in digging for the root of every thing he looks at. It is not enough for him that a flower looks beautiful, but he must examine the filth and the soil in which it grew: as if all that is pleasing in the world ought to become subject to so strict an investigation. You have often, my dear, heard me quote a passage,—from what author I never cared to enquire,—that says 'I would ride forty miles to see the man, who is pleased he knows not why, and cares not wherefore.'"

"Then I am pleased with Mr. Gruff," answered Emma with an arch smile, "and perhaps know not why. Still I delight to hear him recount his troubles, then to compare them with his horoscope, and sometimes be the first to laugh at himself, and acknowledge that after all they are all his own seeking for. But I am serious to-night," added she, her voice faltering as she spoke; while all that makes pity and sympathy look so beautiful in the face of a woman, when interceding in the behalf of another, called up the angel in her countenance, as she said, "I know you will do all you can for the poor young gentleman whose father was killed yesterday, for he has neither friends, nor home now."

"I will do anything that you desire, my dear," answered her father, "that is, in reason.—It was a very sudden, and very shocking accident. The clergyman will, I dare say, go round amongst his friends in the young man's behalf, and collect him a few shillings;—and you can call at the Rectory in the morning, and head the subscription with my name and a contribution of five pounds;" and he gave his daughter the five sovereigns as he spoke; then, pausing a moment, added to them five more shillings, saying "I will make it guineas, it reads better in a list than pounds."

"But I want you to do more than this," said the kind-hearted girl; "although this trifle will do something towards lessening the expenses of his father's funeral. It is not money that I mean, But Dr. Preedom wishes you to intercede in procuring the young gentleman the situation of schoolmaster, which you know is at present vacant; for he says you have the power of obtaining a majority of votes in his favour amongst your own tenantry, if you will be good enough to interest yourself. And I'm sure, if you were only to have a few minutes' conversation with the young man, you would do all that lies in your power for him, for he is so young and modest, and well-behaved, and has neither home, nor father, nor friend, that they must be very cruel-hearted indeed who can refuse him anything."

"Well! well!" replied her father, his thoughts flowing into other channels at the moment, and never regarding the eulogium she had uttered in the young man's favour. "Dr. Preedom has also influence, that may be of use to me in other quarters; for he is highly respected by the neighbouring gentry.—You can return me the money, as it will not be needed.—I had intended giving my interest in favour of the person Lord Wildman was about to bring forward:—but we were not invited to his last party—so are again equal.—And if Dr. Preedom

particularly wishes me to intercede—that is, if the young man's previous character—I mean, my dear, that if upon enquiry, nothing is found against him to prevent—that is—you had better go to bed,—good night:—I will see about this business in the morning."

Reader, thou mayest have seen a daring rider mount a spirited horse on a dark night, and set off at a brisk gallop from the front of the hostel (lit up by its one solitary lamp), and just waving a drunken adieu to his companions, who are viewing his departure from the window, all and each 'half seas over.' Thou mayest have heard the clatter of his horse's hoofs ringing down the dark street, and have fancied how little he cared for so long a journey, on so gloomy a night. But thou canst not see him when he reaches the dreary and solitary country road,—when, like the immortal Tam O'Shanter, he

> "Glowers round wi' prudent cares,
> Lest bogles catch him unawares."

And how he startles and becomes 'afeared,' when he has to

> —"cross the ford,
> Where in the snow the chapman smoored;
> And past the birks, and meikle stane
> Where drunken Charlie brak's neck bane;
> And thro' the whins, and by the cairn
> Where hunters fund the murdered bairn;
> And near the thorn aboon the well,
> Where Mungo's mither hanged hersel."

Thou mayest, dear reader, have seen, or by our aid already imagined, all this; yet thou canst not call up so startling a 'bogle' as that which the squire's conscience did, while talking to his daughter. Previous character was to him more dreadful than the snow-storm which smothered the pedlar; the stone over which drunken Charley broke his neck, a pebble to Stonehenge, when brought in comparison with the massy bulk on which his conscience stumbled. His thoughts hunted up the past, and it teemed with more horrid things than the 'murdered bairn' Burns's huntsmen found among the 'prickly whins.' And 'Mungo's mither' looked not blacker when her ebon form hung on the gnarled and solitary thorn above the lonely well, than did the squire's heart, when he dared to look into it. His conscience hung like the lever which checks some dreadful machine, and seems as if every moment it would break and grind to death the trembling victim who has tumbled into the midst of the silent wheels. His thoughts felt all the awful pressure—the sharp, horrid edges that glittered around him,

and his fancy heard the awful movements as they revolved round, until he awoke like one in a horrid dream.

"And who was Squire Ingledew?"—this was a question everybody asked, and which no one was able to answer. He was wealthy, but no one knew how he had obtained that wealth. One point only was clear: he had bought and paid for the large freehold on which he resided, lived in 'high style,' kept up a large establishment, paid his servants the highest wages in the county, kept his carriage, hounds, hunters, and owned all the wide domains of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, its park, hall, farms, etc. But, in spite of all these things, he was shunned by the higher orders of the country gentry; for the cry was still, who is he?—from whence did he come?—what was he before he purchased that immense estate? Others were not so particular; it was enough for them that he was rich, and could command a good sprinkling of votes,—the only check he had on his high-born neighbours.

But he was wealthy; and what need he care for their remarks? He was also very proud of his daughter; still, the certainty that she would be rich caused him sadly to neglect her, and to pay but little regard to what the world calls "accomplishments." She could sing sweetly, for her voice was naturally soft; could play tolerably well on the piano,—but her father was no judge of music; could paint flowers, and write bad verses, and yet possessed a high and natural appreciation of good poetry. She loved birds, squirrels, and rabbits; for her heart was full of affection. But the deep well of her mind was almost utterly neglected. She knew but little of the world, and the deficiency had both its good and evil; for her thoughts and feelings were all honest. She had never been taught to smile when her heart was sad, to pay empty and unmeaning compliments, nor affect what she never felt. Thus, if, on the one hand, she was ignorant of much that is truly good and great in the world, on the other she was also unconscious of its hollow plausibilities and shadowy pretensions,—awful eruptions, which, instead of the warm and cheering fire of the heart, heave up a black and bitter lava, that burns for a time with an unnatural heat, and at last settles down into a hard, hateful, and encrusted mass. But we are overrunning the events of our story.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW THE COMMITTEE MET AT THE BROWN COW, AND WHAT THEY SAID AND DID, WITH A DULL DISSERTATION ON DINNERS, ETC.

We shall neither follow the steps of Gregory Gruff, whilst he canvassed the neighbourhood for votes, in favour of Godfrey Malvern, nor dwell upon the stately condescension of Squire Ingledew, who, at the solicitation of Parson Preedom, consented to use his influence in the young stranger's behalf. One thing went a great way in Godfrey's favour, and this was the letter the worthy clergyman had received from the gentleman under whom he had served as usher—it lauded our hero 'to the skies.'

How Godfrey Malvern passed away his time until the day of election, we have not now leisure to tell. The scenery in the neighbourhood was very beautiful, so was Emma Ingledew, and she generally accompanied the clergyman and his niece in their walks, when they pointed out to the young stranger all that was picturesque and romantic in the neighbourhood.

Turn we at once to the day on which the election took place—the great, the important day, which decided the fate of the future pedagogue of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, and installed him into its privileges and troubles, and forty pounds per annum, paid quarterly.

Ten o'clock in the morning, found the committee ready assembled in the large parlour of the Brown Cow, which was the only public-house in the village, and was kept by mine hostess, Jane Tomlinson, a good-looking rosy widow, who had not yet seen forty summers. Had she possessed an hundred votes, she would have given them all in favour of Godfrey Malvern. In that parlour all the important parish-business was transacted. There they levied rates, discussed the repairing of highways, and byways, their plans for employing or relieving the poor; settled the prices of hay and corn, looked into the conduct of the county members, discussed politics, and everything, indeed, important in village-life.

Besides Godfrey, there were two other candidates who had put up for the schoolmastership of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, and, although the squire had exerted himself in our hero's favour, and he had with him the patronage of the parson, and Gregory Gruff, still there were a

majority of hard-headed farmers, independent of either the parson or the squire; and they were resolved to vote only for the 'best man.'

Ranged beside a large square table, which occupied the centre of the parlour, sat the committee, with Parson Preedom at the upper end, as chairman of the meeting. Although the hour was so early, ale-jugs and glasses were on the table, and several of the farmers were smoking their pipes, while discussing (what they considered) the highest essentials for a schoolmaster. Here sat one gnawing the end of his riding whip, and patting the favourite shepherd-dog as it sat with its head resting on his knee. Another, with one hand thrust into the bosom of his ample waistcoat, was musing to himself and drawing circles on the sanded floor with the point of his walking-stick, and looking as if he had some doubts about the matter. A third was holding up his ale-glass to the light, and remarking to his neighbour, that "this brewing looked a shade thicker than the last, and was rather over-new for his drinking,"—then, in the next moment, he emptied it at a draught. A fourth was amusing himself by thrusting out his booted leg, and ever and anon drawing it sharply back again, while the long spur with which his heel was armed, made an unpleasant grating noise on the sanded floor. Another sat watching the huge volume of smoke which he, from time to time, sent forth, as it rose blue and curling to the ceiling of the room. Next to him was a farmer of the old school, who, with his chin resting on the top of his horn-headed staff, sat with one eye closed, thinking over the questions he intended putting to the new candidates.

In this manner were the group arranged, drinking, smoking, and talking, while the parson and Gregory Gruff seemed also in close consultation together.

At length the three candidates were called into the room, and ranged at the lower end of the table. Godfrey Malvern stood in the centre, and his commanding figure instantly arrested all eyes; while one honest farmer remarked to his companion—"I'm afraid that middle chap has over much of the gentleman in him to measure land and marl-pits for us, if he were elected." Godfrey had indeed the look of a gentleman, and the black suit which he wore became him well;—there might be a little too much care bestowed in the arrangement of his hair; but from a child he had always been remarkably particular in his person, and, although his teeth were white, and his nails spotless, and his hair never disordered, yet few young men spent less time at the toilette than Godfrey; for nature had given him a clean gentlemanly appearance.

There was also a fine intellectual expression in his countenance, a firm compression about the lips, a fire in his deep sunk eye, and a manly erectness about his figure. But at times a cloudy kind of melancholy seemed to settle on his face, it assumed something bordering on sadness, and this too, when he was only absorbed in deep thought; but after all it helped to make out what a painter would call a 'fine head.'

The opposing candidate, who stood on his right hand, was a man somewhat advanced in years; a schoolmaster of 'the old school;' one who thought that to read well, write a fair hand, and be master of the rule of three, was knowledge enough for a king. And by the aid of divers and sundry 'whackings,' he had (as he thought, and as many of their parents believed), turned out several promising pupils. He had become a candidate, for (to him) the greatest of all reasons, as the salary offered at Sutton-cum-Bottesford exceeded what he received at Nettlethorpe, ten pounds sterling annually. He had a turn-up-nose, red hair, small sharp ferret-like eyes;—and with him carried the wishes of all his pupils, who prayed that he might either be elected, or break his neck before he again returned to Nettlethorpé.

The other candidate, who stood on the left of Godfrey, was a young merry mercurial dog, who neither cared for the place, nor the salary; but had come, as he said, "to smoke the old covies, enjoy a good dinner, and a holiday," for he had an excellent school of his own at a neighbouring village, and was well known to nearly all there present. The secret was, he had been invited to oppose Godfrey, by squire Ingledew's wealthy opponent—Lord Wildman.

But, we must now come to what was called the business part of the matter; which consisted of sundry interrogations put by the committee to the candidates; and, according to the answers given, so were they considered eligible to the situation.

The clergyman put the first question, fixing his eye on the young man who stood on the left of Godfrey, while he said, "is man singular or plural?"

"Plural, of course," answered the wag, nudging Godfrey with his elbow as he spoke, as if to say, I'll smoke the old fellow.

"I said, man, sir," replied the clergyman, "not men."

"I humbly beg your pardon," rejoined the wag; "but you sounded the a so much like e, that I mistook it for men. Man, sir, is always singular; he is indeed a very singular being, as my worthy friend, Gregory Gruff, can testify."

A loud burst of laughter from several of the farmers, made the roof ring again; and long before it subsided, the parson had resumed his seat.

"What do they call the female of a gander?" inquired a simple old farmer.

"A ganderess," answered the wag, readily, "as count, countess, duke, duchess, and so on."

"Then I've won a quart of ale," said the old man, "for I bet it wasn't goosess."

"How many parsonal pronouns are there?" inquired another. "I only ask for information, for I argue, that in spite of grammar rules, they may run 'em up to any number."

"So they may," answered the young schoolmaster, "as yours, theirs, his, mine, ours, other folks's, somebody else's, and so on, up to your aunt's, uncle's, and everybody's, and down to nobody's."

"What remarkable person died in 1830?" said another, looking at the oldest candidate.

"Squire Henson," replied the old man: "he could drink his six bottles at a sitting."

"He means, what great man died in that year?" said the parson.

"He was one of the greatest men I ever saw," answered the old schoolmaster; "for he weighed above twenty stone; and followed the hounds up to within a few weeks of his death."

"What year, within the last twenty years, did corn fetch the highest price?" inquired an old farmer.

"That year you ground up all your beans, and sold them for the best wheaten flour," replied Gregory Gruff, who had long been fidgetting in his chair. "That year you lost your law-suit with the miller; you remember it well enough. You'll be asking next, how much malt Oliver Cromwell's father consumed at a brewing; or, whether queen Elizabeth cut her finger-nails with a pair of scissors, or a penknife; as if it mattered a farthing whether she bit them off, or not, when they had grown too long. Bah! humbug! all books that contain such like questions, ought to be burnt. Ask your children such things as never were, nor ever will be found out, if you like:—something that will set them a-thinking; and then you will begin to do them good. But such stuff as they put in books, now-a-days, is neither my eye, nor my elbow." After this most original outbreak, Gruff sat down more at his ease, and business again proceeded; for the next questions were put to Godfrey Malvern.

"How many perches are there in my twenty-seven acre field?" the enquiry of a bluff, hard-featured old farmer.

"4,320 perches, and 108 roods," answered Godfrey.

"You've hit it to a T," said the old man. "I looked at our Jack's arithmetic before I come out. Your the chap for my money, if you can but measure gravel-pits."

"Can you spell me valetudinarian?" enquired another, taking a piece of paper from his waistcoat pocket as he spoke, and poking the side of his companion with his elbow, while he added in a whisper, "This is a poser for him. I copied it out of our Bill's spelling book before I left home, an' it's the hardest word I could find."

Godfrey looked at the clergyman and smiled, then spelt the word correctly as he divided it into its proper syllables.

"Dang thee, thou'rt a 'cute chap, however," said the farmer; "and if thou won't be above measuring a bit of land now and then, I'll vote for thee."

But we should only weary the reader—if indeed we have not already done so—were we to recount all the interrogatories which were put to and answered by Godfrey. Some enquired how much so many tons of hay came to at so much a pound; others what a bullock would bring in at so many pounds to the quarter; a third, how many loads there would be in a manure heap, of such a length, breadth, and height; a fourth how many bushels of potatoes a field would produce of so many acres; a fifth, an old wheel-wright, how many square feet of timber there would be in a tree of the dimensions which he stated. All these and numerous other questions Godfrey answered, without much hesitation, and when he left the room, he was elected unanimously; and on being called in again, was welcomed with three-times-three; until the huzzaing was so loud, that Gregory Gruff was compelled to thrust a finger in each ear to drown the loud tumult.

Then commenced a shaking of hands, and it was "Drink with me," —"and with me;" and so many glasses were uplifted at once, that had Godfrey possessed the rotundity of Falstaff, he could scarcely have swallowed all that were offered him.

Order was at length restored, and the accounts for the previous year audited; many of the items were curious. There was Daniel in the Lion's Den, Ruth and Boaz, slates and pencils, copy-books. Testaments, coals, David and Uriah, pens, ink. The Wisdom of Solomon. Catechisms, spelling books, arithmetics. Samson and Delilah coloured,—for so were the Christmas-pieces set down, in the midst of other

items, just as they had been purchased. Then came a list of prize books, not one of which had been given away, as not a single pupil in the school had passed his examination. Godfrey looked blank at this announcement, while Gregory Gruff declared it was all owing to not giving them something original to think about, and that all the blame was to be laid on the trumpery school books. Indeed, Gruff spoke so much to the point, that although not one understood what he said, yet he was elected along with another farmer as Visitor of the school for the ensuing quarter. This announcement at once appeared to soothe the anger of Gregory, and he whispered to the clergyman, that he knew some great change was about to take place, for his horoscope had never yet deceived him. "You shall now see something like a school," continued Gregory; "the present race of clodhoppers shall give way to a new race who can think. I will strike out a new system of education. I will watch the development of their minds, and cultivate them like plants, each in his own congenial soil; for mankind, my dear friend, require treating like flowers, or vegetables; some thrive best in a heavy, others in a light soil. Look at the breed of horses: who would think of training the heavy colt for the course? or a thorough-bred racer for the road? Watch their minds; that is the secret, my friend. If one shows an inclination for water, make him a sailor, for that is his element. If for fire, a soldier, for he will always have a hankering after gunpowder. If he is fond of cutting wood, then apprentice him to a carpenter. If cruel, he will make a good butcher, and that may be the means of saving him from murdering some fellow-creature."

So Gregory ran on, endeavouring to prove that all the errors of mankind originate in not allowing the human mind to follow its own bent, or, to use his own words, "In not letting children have their own way from the first."

It would but retard the progress of our story to describe the dinner furnished by the hostess, and eaten by the committee. "It went off," as our readers may suppose, much lighter than it came on, although it was a most weighty affair. With one or two exceptions, they were men who worked with both hands, who never dreamed of feeding themselves with a fork only, while they could carry up such ample mouthfuls on the huge broad-ended knives—knives made purposely for peas, and such small matters, a score of which might be uplifted at a time.

Poor Parson Preedom looked aghast at the "small portion" of lamb

to which a farmer had helped him; for, when he had persuaded Gruff and Godfrey to take a part, the remainder caused him to fall into a dissertation on the huge meals made by the ancient Saxons, when neither bread nor vegetables were much called for.

They needed neither soup nor fish. Here smoked a whole quarter of lamb, there a boiled leg of mutton; further on, a vast mountain of roast beef. Mingled with these was the steam of early potatoes, peas, summer-cabbage, mashed-turnips, etc. Then came huge jugs of ale, each showing its hoary head of foam; and amid the smoke and clatter rose the voice of mine hostess, who superintended the whole scene,—now abusing Betty, then snarling at John, and in the next moment laughing at some rustic joke, or attending herself to the wants of the clergyman and Gregory Gruff, or dropping some kind word of no consequence to Godfrey Malvern.

But to tell all that was done and said on this important occasion would occupy a long and tedious chapter, which we are not now disposed to do. If the meeting was deficient in the etiquette found at higher and more formal parties, it lacked not the greater essentials of heartiness, good-will, and solid comfort. For we here record it as a truth, now discovered by thousands, that too much ceremony is both unnecessary and unnatural; and that after this is removed, and when the warmth of the bottle has melted down these colder forms, then do men in high stations sink down into that state of familiar comfort, which humbler parties, such as we have faintly pourtrayed, find from the beginning. True, however, it is, that in both stations,—to use a homely phrase,—"extremes may be carried too far;" although a stranger to English society would see but little difference in the manner of the guests, did he look in at the parting hour, either upon a White Bait party at Lovegrove's, an intellectual assembly at the Freemasons' Tavern, or the jovial Committee in the Brown Cow, at Sutton-cum-Bottesford. 'A man's a man for a' that, and a' that;' and he who endeavours to make his guest as comfortable as lies in his power, even if the best he has to offer him is but bread and cheese, does as much as the titled duke or high-born peer. Rank, honour, and honesty, are but three different roads, all leading at last to the same termination.

CHAPTER V.

A GLANCE AT GODFREY'S PUPILS;—AND HOW GREGORY GRUFF INVENTED A NEW SYSTEM OF THINKING:—ALSO A DASH OF THE DESCRIPTIVE, AND A PEEP AT THE PHILOSOPHICAL.

Godfrey Malvern was now installed schoolmaster of Sutton-cum-Bottesford; and amid the million monarchs who have swayed the birchen sceptre over the realms of A, B, C, since the day when Saxon Alfred was first taught his letters, never had any one such a race of blockheads to enlighten, and rebels to subdue, as those consigned to the care of our hero. In the old games of Stag-hunt, I spy, Dicky-dicky-touchwood, Birds in the air, See-saw, &c., they stood unrivalled; but put them to their books, and they were all arrant dolts. No village in the shire could turn out such a race of orchard-robbers, bird-nesters, wrestlers, foot-ball players, and even fighters; for they too often played at 'French and English' until they came to good downright blows; while as to their slates and copy-books—human eye never fell upon such vile scrawls. In their sums they made five and five—thirteen; spelt 'commandment' with a K, and began 'honour' with O. In simple addition, made twopence halfpenny out of seven farthings; in subtraction, took 6 from 5 without trouble; carried 1 from 40, and nothing from 10; made B, a vowel, and A, a consonant; and pronounced fatigue, 'fatigew;' then jumped over the forms, the moment Godfrey went out; or, made faces at him if his back was only turned for an instant. They blacked one another's faces with ink; tore up and stole their copy-books to make kites of; broke up their slates to play at 'pitch in the hole' with, or to make 'ducks and drakes' on the river; *sold their school-books for 'toffey;'* played at truant whenever they could make a little party; and bore a whacking without winking;—then at night, robbed the school-garden, by way of retaliation.

In vain did Godfrey attempt to reason with them; they hung down their heads, and counted the marbles in their pockets, while he talked; as for beating, it only seemed to harden them. They stole and broke his canes,—then smoked the pieces; cut out all the plates from their books to play at lotteries with; tied strings to the forms, and strided them for horses; did the sword exercise with their rulers; put the

clock on, to leave the sooner; and cut the bell-rope that they might be rung in the later; and when they wrote, held their pens as they did the darts which they hurled at the garden-door. In a word, they could run, jump, fight, swim, kick shins, rob hen-roosts, climb trees, set snares, pitch and toss, pelt snow-balls, pull down fences to make bonfires, imitate the sounds of dogs, cats, cows, pigs, poultry, sheep, horses, &c. endure cold, heat, hunger, thirst, confinement, or beating; and were clever at every thing, except learning. If a garden was robbed, the owner entered the school next morning, to search for the thief; and seldom failed of finding in some pocket or another, portions of the purloined fruit. If a cat was killed, there they went in search of the skin, and generally found the 'murderous proof.' If a donkey was missing, there they made enquiries who was last seen on its back. Any poultry found killed,—there they gathered information as to who was seen last pelting them, or hovering about the farm-yard gate with bow and arrow. In fact, there was no mischief done, no roguish trick played off, but what was attributed to some one or another of Godfrey's promising pupils; not a sucking-pig, duckling, gosling, or chicken killed, without the blame being laid to them.

Before this, Godfrey had presided over pupils, who were confined within the compass of four high brick walls; but now he had to rule over rebels who over-ran half a county; who were as wild as the free birds which sang, and flew through the thick woods that surrounded their rustic homes. It was a wearisome and trying life, to attempt to teach those young savages what they were determined never to learn. They seemed to possess talents for every thing, save their books; as if learning was the only stumbling-block which could by any chance be thrown in their way—the only obstacle which they could not surmount. True, there were one or two exceptions, but these were so misled, so cowed by the daring bearing of the others, that they felt afraid of being called 'good scholars.'

It was one noon, just as the school was 'unloosed,' when one of the dullest still sat crying over his 'unsaid' task, his heart saddened at the loud huzzas and merry laughter of his playfellows still heard from without, when Godfrey sat with his forehead resting on the palm of his hand, ruminating on his hopeless pupils, that Gregory Gruff entered the school, as was his custom every day.

"Well," said Gregory, in his usual brief familiar way, "any proceeds and improvement from the plans I have laid down? Do they begin to think, to look more serious, to whisper to one another?"

"Not a jot!" answered Godfrey, gravely; "they whisper too much; but it is only when they are devising new mischief; and look serious when they are found guilty of some old offence. I fear me they are past all cure."

"All in good time yet, my young friend," said Gruff: "Rome was not built in a day. I'll attend to them a little more myself; I'll question them, set them a wondering, give them subjects to think about, such as will set their wits to work, and such as they will never discover. I'll read you over a few which I have drawn up for the purpose. They are simple, and may cause you to smile; but they will answer in the end." Gregory then drew forth his memorandum-book, and proceeded as follows:—"Now, my young friend, you will perceive that the system I have adopted is a very simple one, and yet entirely new. First, it will draw their minds from other things, and when once they begin to think, the business is as good as done. These are the questions I intend to begin with:—Why does a dog turn round so many times before he lies down? How is it that a cat can see best in the dark? Why can pigs only see the wind? And why does a hare sleep with its eyes open? And how is it that a fly can walk with its feet uppermost and we cannot?"

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Godfrey, springing from his seat, and interrupting Gruff before he had got through the half of his intended questions, "you cannot surely be in earnest? Why, the dogs will be pulled to death, to make them lie down; not a cat be found for miles around with an eye in its head; not a hare seen again about the village; the pigs hunted to death; while all day long they will be murdering flies, or trying to walk on their heads, and our school will become the dread and the laughing-stock of the whole county. Question them about natural history if you will, but not such nonsense as you now propose."

"And what the devil is this, but natural history?" replied Gregory, now red as a fiery sunset: "you would have me ask them such questions as they could learn from almost any book. What would there be original in such a system, eh? Such questions as I shall ask will set them a thinking the longest day they have to live; for nobody can answer them. They will also serve their fathers and mothers to think about as well, and then you see I kill two birds with one stone. They may be nonsensical, I know they are; but what are the questions which their books contain? The language of the ancient Britons—who knows it? Where the Romans crossed the

river Thames—who can tell? What kind of houses did the Saxons build?—who ever saw one or described it? The shape of the Danish ships?—when was a wreck so-old discovered? If they must be taught to think, why not give them lies they can never learn, in place of filling them with the stale imaginings of some antiquary's brain? Were I to found a new university, I would have a professor of riddles and conundrums, and he should monopolize all the literature of tobacco papers; for he, at least, would set all the smokers a-thinking." So saying, Gruff pocketed his papers, and left the room, nor could Godfrey refrain from laughing heartily when he had gone.

But every night has its day, and the life of the young schoolmaster was, with all its drawbacks, far from being unhappy; for the clergyman was still his friend, and the parsonage-house his home.

But we are bound as faithful historians, to show how the young schoolmaster passed his hours, when disengaged from the trammels of the school; nor are we in any hurry to hurl our readers headlong into plot and mystery, for our story is like a stream that deepens as it runs; and by and by, it will become dark and terrible enough, although we shall neither call in the aid of 'ghosts' nor 'sky-blue flames.'

A village, after all we have written in praise of the country, is but a dull place to pass any length of time in, unless the mind can find amusement among the beauties of nature; then it may be made a paradise: and the days would have hung heavily on Godfrey's hands, had not the kind-hearted old parson planned many a little excursion for his amusement after school-hours, or during the half-holidays. As it was, there were many scenes to visit, lovely spots, such as are to be found only in England;—woods to wander in, a delicious river to loiter beside, ruins rich in traditions, and remains of Roman encampments;—but where is there a place without such wonders as these? Nor need we dwell upon the pleasure felt by the parson when pointing out to the young schoolmaster such splendid traces of bygone ages, for in Godfrey he found a patient and attentive listener; the first indeed in his life-time (saving his own niece) who could sit without yawning while he read his own manuscript "History and Antiquities of Sutton-cum-Bottesford." Then the worthy clergyman had a collection of rusty rubbish, which had either been dug up in the neighbourhood, or purloined from some old iron-store; and as he was still undecided whether they belonged to the Druids, or the Danes, so had he no end of arguments—which made others equally as doubtful as himself about the matter. He was also a dear lover of old books; no

matter how dry or uninteresting their contents might be to others, to him they furnished endless amusement. The quaint spelling of the words, the oddly engraved initial letters, the rude woodcuts, the very paper itself with its ancient water-mark, to him possessed strange charms. What pleasure it gave the old man, when he found that Godfrey was a lover of black-letter-lore as well as himself. With what delight did he show his old Chaucer, Pierce Plowman, Gower, Lydgate, Ship of Fools, Skelton, Spenser, and many another rare work, which are only known for their antiquity, although treasured by book-worms like ourselves, for the true and sterling poetry which they contain. In spite of his 'antiquarian trade,' he had brought the wisdom of ages to his own hearth, and had the knowledge of the 'mighty dead' at his command; for, dreamer although he seemed to some, he had a much clearer knowledge of the living world, than thousands who daily mingle in 'its breathless strife.' He had learned to look upon danger with a calm unflinching eye, to stand firm when others shook beneath the sudden shocks which this life is subject to; for upon him they came not unexpected, he had read the great book of the world: and from the time that Adam went weeping through the gates of Eden, knew that the doom of man was sorrow and death, and, that he who looks only for happiness on earth, will sink disappointed into his grave.

With such a friend Godfrey Malvern found himself more at ease than he had ever before been in his life-time, and was determined to endure the daily drudgery which a village schoolmaster is compelled to go through. The old clergyman seldom missed a day, when the weather was fine, without taking, as he called it, 'a good long country walk;' and as his niece, together with the squire's daughter, oft-times joined in these rural rambles, he saw no reason why they should be discontinued since Godfrey had become his guest. Besides, the young man was a great lover of nature, an admirable sketcher; and on one or two occasions had given such proofs of the power of his pencil, that the kind old man had now serious thoughts of bringing out "The History and Antiquities of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, with illustrations by Godfrey Malvern."

Some of the surrounding scenery was indeed really beautiful, especially that which stretched southward from the village, and skirted the banks of the river. This was the old man's favourite walk; nor can there be found in the wide domain of England a spot embodying so much of the wild and picturesque, amid scenery which here and there

may be called purely pastoral. Beyond the village, and beside the very edge of the common highway, rose a row of goodly and ancient elms, revealing on the one hand farm-houses, cottages, and orchards, and sunny fields that came sloping down to the roadside, rich in corn and clover, and every variety of bladed grass. Here sheep bleated and moved slowly over the rich greenery of the fields, shaking their jingling bells as they fed on the flowery herbage, and cropped from the little hillocks the sweet and savoury thyme. There lowed the well-fed oxen as they grazed knee-deep in luxuriant pastures, or chewing the cud, rested with their brown and glossy hides half buried in the tall and varied flowers of summer. Further on, the grey old waggon went rumbling over the glebe, and the crack of the driver's whip mingling with the heavy creaking of the wheels, gave life and sound to the scene. Then came the human figures that dotted the landscape,—women stooping and at work in the fields, weeding or planting, in costumes of all colours, russet, red, and blue, and grey, and men moving to and fro, like forms seen in dreams, now hidden by trees and hedges, then again bursting upon the view silent as shadows, yet breaking the still blue of heaven, and the sleeping sunshine of the earth, with all the imagery, and beauty, and colour of real country life. On the other hand rolled the dreamy river, broad and bright, beneath its fringe of silvery-shivering willows, which ever as the breeze blew upturned the white lining of their leaves to the light, and threw a deep shadow over the crisped ripples, which came rolling out of the path of the sunshine, then slept murmuring at their feet. Far across the river rose the ruins of a grey old castle, its tall turrets half buried in ivy; while on its ridgy battlements—where once warden and archer passed, their armour flashing back the blaze of sunshine,—the wild and fragrant wall-flower now waved. Then dim and distant rose the tapering spire from a neighbouring market-town, overlooking the tall chimneys, which pointed out its stifling manufactories; while over all stretched a cloudy curtain of smoke, dim, silvery, and mist-like, yet all in keeping with the scene.

But it was at the extremity of the meadows beyond the village, where the grand features of the landscape lay. Here rose a wood, bold, abrupt, and steep; its long shaggy side fronting the river, while its dark tree-tops towering aloof were seen for miles away above the surrounding country. A green shadowy road, cleft through the wooded eminence, rising like the brow of a stupendous arch, balustraded and overhung with an awning of enormous trees, which kept

cool the grassy pathway, even in the burning noons of summer. Below the hill, and by the very edge of the river, ran a narrow footpath, over which drooped the boughs of many a goodly and graceful tree, in some places hanging so low that the branches touched the water. Along this embowered and shady walk the worthy old clergyman loved to saunter away the idle hour, or on an evening watch the sun as it set over the rich pastoral landscape. Some would deem, that with such companions as Emma Ingledew and the parson's niece, Godfrey's time passed pleasantly enough. So it might have done;—but there were hours when the young man loved to be alone,—when the merry laughter and lively conversation of the proud squire's daughter failed to call up a smile on the cheek of the schoolmaster. He felt sad when he thought of his future prospects in life: he could obtain no clue to his own origin, could discover no traces of what his father had been, for not a single letter was found in his portmanteau to throw a light upon his history. Nothing but a few beautiful slight sketches done with a pencil, hasty views of places he might have passed on his journey from London, when he came down to fetch Godfrey from school; but not a trace of his 'whereabout,' when dwelling in the metropolis. Even the few letters which Godfrey had written while usher, were left at the General Post-office until called for. No marvel, then, that the young man sighed, when his thoughts brooded over the past; or that his heart sank within him when he looked on the thick mists which seemed to hang over the pathway of the future. And but for these occasional walks, and his own intellectual resources, what a life it was to lead!—to be pent up in a little secluded village,—to sit day after day, hearing those heavy-headed urchins their lessons; to be dinned with A B "ab," I B "ib," E B "eb," and O B "ob;" and that too when gifted with a mind which could appreciate the beauties of Shakspeare and Milton;—to see the same dull inexpressive faces every day—to hear the incessant din of that little Babel, and when wrapt in poetical reverie, to be aroused by the squeaking voice of some tiny brat, who had come to say C A T "cat," H A T "hat," and so on to the bottom of the page—

"Set after set, the lower lads to make
Fit for the class which their superiors take;
The round of learning for a time to track,
In roughest state, and then again go back;
Just the same way on other troops to wait,—
Attendants fixed at learning's lower gate."

CRABBE'S *Borough*.

Nor was Godfrey as yet even in love, to vary the monotonous routine of life, for he admired intellect more than external beauty; and although the surpassing loveliness of Emma Ingledew had caused many a traveller to halt on his journey, and gaze until her fair form was lost to the eye, still her image had no dwelling-place, either in his heart or memory. But we must turn to other things, to the "slender thread" on which often hangs the fate of even kings and kingdoms. For we know not what a day or an hour may bring forth —the toy taken up to while away an idle moment with, may suggest some thought, which, when followed up, has an influence on our future life; and it was while gazing idly on an old newspaper that the fortune of Godfrey Malvern was changed—that he aspired to become something greater than a village schoolmaster.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW GODFREY MALVERN ALL AT ONCE BECAME POPULAR AS A POET; AND ASTONISHED HIMSELF,—THE BOROUGH,—AND SUTTON-CUM-BOTTESFORD.

About three miles distant from Sutton-cum-Bottesford, stood a small market-town, or borough, which we shall call Buttervote; and which probably never would have been heard of, had it not sent (to represent some three thousand inhabitants) two members to Parliament. The borough was remarkable for nothing, saving a violent party feeling in politics; to keep up which, it supported two papers, each, of course, advocating different principles; and chiefly held up by the abuse which one party showered upon the other. The average circulation of the papers weekly, was about five hundred each, which included the numbers sold in the neighbouring villages. In so small a town, there was naturally a great dearth of local news; so much so, that if a shoemaker had a son, it was announced; or if Tomkins had grown a larger gooseberry than usual, the weight was given: the earliest bird's nest was duly recorded; the departure of the swallows, noticed; and even the death of any cow, through eating too much clover, or what not, was duly chronicled; for, as the publisher said to the farmer, when he came for his paper on the market-day, "all these things, you see, sir, trifles as they seem, are News." Beside the abuse, which contributed most

to their sale, each of the papers, as one of the editors observed, "was greatly dependent on its local literature, to give it a local interest." Thus, each had its 'poet's corner;' and its regular contributions, 'To a Snow Drop;' 'To A— Singing;' 'On the death of Miss —'s Favourite Canary;' and many other similar matters, which were very interesting to the young ladies on whom they were written; as also to their papas, mammas, and all their relations.

It was while listlessly turning over one of these papers, that Godfrey's eye alighted upon some verses, signed 'Philomel,' (which were sad rubbish) when the thought struck him, that one or two of the fragments he himself had written, might not be rejected. He copied out a short poem, signed it "G. M.," and on the following week, saw it in print. The week after, he sent two pieces, each signed with the same initials; and one of them, a sweet little song, attracted the attention of an eminent composer of music, who chanced to pass an evening at the head hotel in the borough; and for want of company, took up the paper, to while away the time until the mail arrived. He wrote a letter to the editor, giving his name and address in London; and requesting permission to set the stanzas to music. The letter, of course, appeared in the paper; and to it was appended a note by the editor, begging their 'talented contributor' to send an answer to the Minerva Office. This, Godfrey did; and felt highly honoured at the notice bestowed upon his verses, by so celebrated a composer, though he still concealed his own name.

This incident, slight as it was, created quite a sensation in the little town: first, to know that they had been honoured by a visit from so great a musician; and then to think that they should never before have discovered the beauty of 'G. M.'s' poetry. And who was 'G. M.?' George Monk, a grocer's apprentice, who was known to be guilty of scribbling, looked very knowing, but said nothing. Gregory Mitchell, who had contributed to no end of albums, only smiled when taxed with the authorship; and when pressed to stay later than usual, at the little party in which he figured as 'lion,' "hoped they would excuse him, as he generally devoted an hour or so, to writing, before retiring to the poppied arms of Morpheus." They knew then that he was the author. "What a delightful sentence!" and he was no sooner gone, than Miss Julia Wiggins flew to the piano, and began to play an original air; suggested, as she said, by the beauty of that last sentence. So she warbled forth—

"The poppied arms of Morpheus!"

then pressed her hand to her forehead, and owned the inspiration was

gone; calling at the same time, in a very feeble voice, for "a little cold water."

Godfrey had one scholar, whose aunt resided in the village, while his parents dwelt in the borough; and the boy went home every Saturday afternoon, and returned on the Monday, now and then in time for school; this, however, depending much upon the stray donkeys he met with, or the season when birds' nests were most plentiful. But, he was a good boy at going an errand, and always brought something back, although it often proved to be sugar, when it should have been tea; but the shopkeepers got at last so used to him, that they trusted more to his money than his memory; and counting it out first, gave him what the sum came to. Godfrey had, more than once, sent his contributions to the papers by this hopeful Mercury; and hitherto they had never miscarried. One day, however, he lost the little packet; for the stray donkey which he had mounted, ran away with him, and his cap came off: this he again recovered, but never bestowed a thought on the letter, which had fallen among the grass by the road side. It chanced that the man who delivered the opposition Newspaper, picked up the lost packet, and instead of leaving it at the 'Minerva Office,' as addressed, took it to 'the Journal.' The publisher could not do less than have a peep at its contents. It was poetry, and signed 'G. M.' as usual; and at the bottom there was an additional verse added to the 'song,' which greatly improved its beauty. Now this very song had become a 'town's talk,' and fifty extra copies of the 'Minerva,' beside slips, had been sold, in consequence of the application made to set it to music. It had, in fact, been 'gall and wormwood' to the publisher of 'the Journal.' Here then was a god-send; he need only to reprint the song, with the additional stanza, and the original verses, which were in the same packet; write a little introductory notice, and the unknown G. M. must discover himself, and perhaps in future, write only for the Journal. But then there was the editor of the paper to consult: this was soon done; and he folded it in another sheet of paper; destroyed the old envelope; and addressed it to 'the editor of the Journal;' then shut it up in the editor's box.

When the editor came, he tore open the packet, and said, "there is some mistake here." The publisher looked at the address, as if he knew nothing of the matter, declaring he saw no mistake in it; that it was evident the author was tired of writing for so ill-managed a paper as the Minerva, and shewed his good taste by selecting one conducted by so intelligent and able a man as himself." This, he accompanied by so

sweet a smile, and so low a bow, requesting at the same time, that he might be allowed to peruse its contents, that it was granted. Also, further declaring that he saw clearly how it was; and begged that he might be allowed to write a line or two as an introduction. To this the editor also consented, believing at the time, the publisher knew all about the matter; and had discovered who G. M. really was. Both papers appeared on the same day: in the 'Minerva' there was a notice to correspondents, deploring the absence of their 'unknown, but heaven-gifted contributor, G. M.' In the 'Journal' there was a flourish of trumpets; the song reprinted together with the additional verse; and some of the best stanzas Godfrey Malvern had hitherto written.

As the verses purported to be only a fragment of a larger poem; and as our readers may be enabled to form some opinion of our hero as a poet, we here subjoin them: they were entitled

A LANDSCAPE AND FIGURES.

"In belted gold the bees with "merry march"
Through flowery towns go sounding on their way:
They pass the red-streak'd woodbine's sun-stained arch,
And onward glide through streets of sheeted May,
Nor till they reach the summer-roses stay,
Where maiden-buds are wrapt in dewy dreams,
Drowsy through breathing back the new-mown hay,
That rolls its fragrance o'er the fringèd streams,—
Mirrors in which the Sun now decks his quivering beams.

"On the far sky leans the old ruined mill,
Through its rent sails the broken sunbeams glow,
Gilding the trees that belt the lower hill,
And the old thorns which on its summit grow.
Only the reedy marsh that sleeps below,
With its dwarf bushes, is concealed from view;
And now a struggling thorn its head doth show,
Another half shakes off the smoky blue,
Just where the dusty gold streams through the heavy dew:

"And there the hidden river lingering dreams,
You scarce can see the banks which round it lie;
That withered trunk, a tree, or shepherd seems,
Just as the light or fancy strikes the eye.
Even the very sheep which graze hard by,
So blend their fleeces with the misty haze,
They look like clouds shook from the unsunned sky,
Ere morning o'er the eastern hills did blaze:—
The vision fades as they move further on to graze.

"A chequered light streams in between the leaves,
Which on the greensward twinkle in the sun;
The deep-voiced thrush his speckled bosom heaves,
And like a silver stream his song doth run,
Down the low vale, edgèd with fir-trees dun.
A little bird now hops beside the brook,
Peaking' about like an affrighted nun;
And ever as she drinks doth upward look,
Twitters and drinks again, then seeks her cloistered nook.

"What varied colours o'er the landscape play!
The very clouds seem at their ease to lean,
And the whole earth to keep glad holiday.
The lowliest bush that by the waste is seen,
Hath changed its dusky for a golden green
In honour of this lovely Summer Morn:
The rutted roads did never seem so clean,
There is no dust upon the wayside thorn,
For every bud looks out as if but newly born.

"A cottage girl trips by with side-long look,
Steadying the little basket on her head;
And where a plank bridges the narrow brook
She stops to see her fair form shadowèd.
The stream reflects her cloak of russet red;
Below she sees the trees and deep blue sky,
The flowers which downward look in that clear bed,
The very birds which o'er its brightness fly:
She parts her loose brown hair, then wondering passes by.

"Now other forms move o'er the footpaths brown
In twos and threes; for it is Market day;
Beyond those hills stretches a little town,
And thitherward the rustics bend their way,
Crossing the scene in blue, and red, and grey;
Now by green hedge-rows, now by oak-trees old,
As they by stile or thatchèd cottage stray.
Peep through the rounded hand, and you'll behold
Such gems as Morland drew, in frames of sunny gold.

"A laden ass, a maid with wicker maun',
A shepherd lad driving his lambs to sell,
Gaudy-dressed girls move in the rosy dawn,
Women whose cloaks become the landscape well,
Farmers whose thoughts on crops and prizes dwell;
An old man with his cow and calf draws near.
Anon you hear the Village Carrier's bell;
Then does his grey old tilted cart appear,
Moving so slow, you think he never will get there.

"They come from still green nooks, woods old and hoary,
The silent work of many a summer's night,
Ere those tall trees attained their giant glory,
Or their dark tops did tower that cloudy height;
They come from spots which the grey hawthorns light,
Where stream-kissed willows make a silvery shiver.
For years their steps have worn those footpaths bright
Where wind along the fields and by the river,
That makes a murmuring sound, as 'ribble-ribble' ever,

"A troop of soldiers pass with stately pace,—
Their early music wakes the village street:
Through yon white blinds peeps many a lovely face,
Smiling—perchance unconsciously how sweet!
One does the carpet press with blue-veined feet,
Not thinking how her fair neck she exposes,
But with white foot timing the drum's deep beat;
And when again she on her pillow dozes,
Dreams how she'll dance that tune 'mong Summer's sweetest roses.

"So let her dream, even as beauty should!
Let the white plumes athwart her slumbers sway!
Why should I steep their swaling snow in blood,
Or bid her think of battle's grim array?
Truth will too soon her blinding star display,
And like a fearful comet meet her eyes.
And yet how peaceful they pass on their way!
How grand the sight as up the hill they rise!—
I will not think of cities reddening in the skies.

"How sweet those rural sounds float by the hill!
The grasshopper's shrill chirp rings o'er the ground,
The jingling sheep-bells are but seldom still,
The clapping gate closes with hollow bound,
There's music in the church clock's measured sound.
The ring-dove's song, how breeze-like comes and goes,
Now here, now there, it seems to wander round:
The red cow's voice along the upland flows;
His bass the brindled bull from the far meadow lows.

Sutton-cum-Bottesford. G. M.

This was the first time that Godfrey Malvern had alluded to his 'whereabout;' and great was the sensation created in the little borough, when it was discovered that out of its three thousand inhabitants, not one had arisen to claim the authorship; but that after all the talk, some obscure individual in the neighbouring village had at last demanded the

long-disputed laurels. That night, Gregory Mitchell absented himself from the party, and George Monk whistled and looked rather down as he passed along the street.

Squire Ingledew took in the Journal; and in the evening, Emma brought it down to the Parsonage, to show, what she called, "such beautiful verses" to the clergyman's niece, together with a little sketch she had made of the Cottage-girl on the rustic bridge. Godfrey was in the parlour when she entered, and had, for the first time in his life, to listen to the reading of his own poetry. The clergyman listened very attentively until the squire's daughter had finished, then begged to be allowed a sight of the paper. He confessed the verses were not without merit; that they were simple and natural; the images such as every body must have seen, and the poetry such as anybody would have written (who could write poetry at all) on such a subject: he then repeated the address twice over; and musing a moment, said, "G. M., and at Sutton-cum-Bottesford!" then turning to Godfrey, added, "My young friend, I err greatly, if this sin does not lie at thy door."

"I must plead guilty," answered Godfrey, "although I am afraid, if it is once blown abroad, that as a schoolmaster, Othello's occupation's gone."

When the kind old man found that his young favourite was the author, he began instantly to discover new beauties in the poetry; and what between the praise of the worthy clergyman, and the approving glances of Emma Ingledew, poor Godfrey wished himself ten miles another road. He had never, before that night, noticed the surpassing loveliness of the squire's daughter.

But we have dwelt too long upon trifles like these, necessary as they are, as stepping-stones to the more important parts of our story. Almost all authors have commenced their career in the corner of a Newspaper: now and then your great genius has startled the world by cracking at once his shell, and coming out in a complete volume; but this only happens very rarely.

Pass we over the wordy war of the two rival editors: they abused each other sweetly, and what they forgot in personalities, they were reminded of, in numerous epistles from kind friends, signed, 'Amicus,' and so on.

It was soon known that Godfrey was the author; and several of the farmers shook their heads, and regretted, when they heard of it, that they had ever elected him schoolmaster of Sutton-cum-Bottesford.

Beside the village, they began to talk about him in the market-town; and there was something so romantic in what was known of his little

history, and something so prepossessing in his looks, that whenever he came to purchase such things as he needed for his school, several sentimental milliners never failed of appearing at their doors, to smile on him as he passed. And one day he was seen speaking to Emma Ingledew in her father's carriage; and on another occasion, Lord Wildman was observed to bow to him; and then it was, that twenty caps were at once set at the village schoolmaster. But we must again glance at Gregory Gruff.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW GREGORY GRUFF CAME TO THINK WIDOW CLARKSON A VERY NICE WOMAN; AND HOW WIDOW CLARKSON CAME TO THINK GREGORY GRUFF A VERY NICE MAN: WITH A GLANCE AT GODFREY;—THE SUBSCRIBERS TOWARDS HIS POEMS, ETC.

Gregory Gruff's horoscope, like a thermometer, once more stood at change; and he had again taken fresh lodgings; and this time it was his lot, to fall in with a very widow; one, who had in fact, buried three husbands, and still looked as young, round, and plump, as if she had never known an hour's sorrow. She knew that Gruff was wealthy; and from the first, had made, what is termed in sporting parlance, 'a dead set' at him. Thus whatever hobby he mounted, she went with him; never on any account thwarting him, but in many things even anticipating his wishes, until at length Gregory confessed to the clergyman, that the widow's company was, at times endurable. Nay, she went so far as to take a dislike to animal food, and declared that she had never before felt so well in her life: she also confessed her belief in nativities; and said that Mr. Gruff was the most sensible and gentlemanly man she had ever met with. Gregory, in return, said that the woman was not given to gossiping like the rest of her sex; that she possessed some discrimination; and was really deserving of a good lodger. All this, widow Clarkson heard again; and she redoubled her energies, hoping soon to become Mrs. Gruff.

When Gregory returned home on an evening, he found his slippers ready aired before the fire, and his old coat thrown over a chair back; even his very chair placed in his favourite spot, and the little footstool within an inch of where he himself would have fixed it. Then she had

so many tender inquiries to make. She fancied Mr. Gruff looked a shade paler than common; she had heard him cough slightly in the night, and was afraid he had taken cold; observed that he had not made so hearty a breakfast as usual; that she was afraid he fatigued himself too much with looking after the school; thought that a little gruel, with a glass of brandy in it, would do him no harm; and that it would be a great pleasure to her, to make him something warm and nourishing before he went to bed. Gruff told the clergyman, that she was the most feeling woman he had ever met with; and that nothing seemed a trouble to her. She soon advanced another step, and (to say nothing of what she took in the interim) seldom sat down to her meals until Gruff came home. It was such a pleasure, she said, to have his company, and to listen to the conversation of such an agreeable man; she had never before seemed lonely at meal-time, until Mr. Gruff came; no, although she had had several gentlemanly lodgers, she did not know how it was. Then Gregory was fond of a peculiar kind of pudding, made of eggs, bread soaked in milk, &c.; and widow Clarkson declared she had never eaten any thing like it in her life, it was quite delightful, and for her part she should never have known how to have made it, had it not been for the kindness of Mr. Gruff. She also took to liking green tea, which before was to her an abomination. And, oh! her garden! it had never been properly managed until Mr. Gruff was so kind as to attend to it; now it looked quite neat and beautiful. True he had dug up and destroyed many of her favourite plants, and cut down some of her choicest trees, but she felt assured that in the end it would all be for the best. Gregory said there was some pleasure in doing any thing for such a woman, for she always seemed thankful, and never grumbled. She then, all at once, became fond of crusts; for she soon found that Gruff had bad teeth, while her own, although now forty, were beautifully white and even. Then she knew how to make her seeming censure sound like praise. True, Mr. Gruff was at times a little hasty, but then it was so soon over; he had a few strange ways with him, but who had not? and after all, they did nobody any harm: and for her part she could only see his good qualities, and they must be blind indeed who could not. The sun, she had heard, had its specks, but she could never see them. Then Godfrey Malvern was such a nice young man, and so great a favourite with Mr. Gruff, although they did not always agree about teaching the children. She really did not know how it was, but she could not feel more for the young gentleman if he was her own son; but she had never been blessed with a child that

lived long. And Parson Freedom, and his niece, and the young lady, Miss Emma Ingledew,—oh! they were all heavenly creatures; and she had to thank kind Mr. Gruff for her acquaintance with such amiable persons. Gregory said she was very grateful, and very modest, and that these were qualities seldom found in women now-a-days. Then one night she felt such a strange sensation about her neck—did not Mr. Gruff think it was slightly swollen? Gregory looked, and, holding the candle very near, thought it was. She bid him feel if it was not rather hard; he felt, and pressed the place slightly with the tip of his fore-finger, then took a huge pinch of snuff. The widow had a very beautiful neck; it was white and well-formed. Gruff confessed next day to the clergyman, that Mrs. Clarkson was a very fine woman; and for two nights Gregory kicked and tossed about in his bed, took an extra ounce of snuff, and wondered what the devil ailed him. Then in the morning the widow saw by his eyes that he had not slept well, took hold of his hand, and said it felt hot; persuaded him not to go out without putting on an under-waistcoat; begged he would not stay late at the parsonage, as the evenings were growing chilly; hoped if he felt no better he would allow her to make him a little gruel, and also to air his bed.

Gruff, at the end of the month, presented her with a sovereign more than her demand, declaring that her kindness merited four times the sum. But she refused to accept it; her only pleasure was to see Mr. Gruff happy and contented; that he already paid like a prince, and that her home had never before afforded her so much comfort as it had since Mr. Gruff became her lodger,—no, not even when poor dear Clarkson was alive, for he was at times very unsocial when he took a little too much drink. Gregory said that she was really a very amiable and considerate woman, and had less selfishness in her nature, than any one he had heretofore met with.

So matters progressed; and it was observed by many that Gregory had become less surly of late; that he spoke of women with more reverence; owned that although generally they were a race of artful gypsies, there were still a few disinterested persons like widow Clarkson in the world; and that after all, bad as they were, men would be but poorly off without them. Such remarks as these caused him to undergo sundry quizzings from the parson's niece, and the squire's daughter. But Gruff consoled himself with the thought that they were but mere girls; that no woman was capable of feeling real, true, and lasting affection until she had reached the age of forty; and that no

man ought to marry until he was a few years older, although, for his part, he would not marry the finest woman that ever stepped in a shoe. That love in a cottage covered with roses, was all very well for a poet; but love in a large farm, with a good kitchen-garden, would suit the wants of a rising family much better. Then he would cast a queer kind of a glance at Emma Ingledew and Godfrey Malvern, while the latter grew eloquent on the reward of fame and the glory of ambition,—how Homer begged his bread, and yet his name lived while those of kings and conquerors were forgotten. And then Emma would turn her large piercing blue eyes upon him and smile, 'Oh Heaven! how she would smile.' Nor was Godfrey ever more eloquent than when in her presence; the cares of his school were then forgotten, and the poetry of Spenser, Shakspeare, and Milton, seemed to gush from his lips like the song of a bird, which, perched on the highest bough of a 'milk-white thorn,' on a lovely morning in early June, sings only for the pleasure of hearing its own voice.

Alas! how soon are the spirits of the young elevated, and too, too soon depressed. In youth we look only at the sunshine whilst it beams warmly and brightly around our path; we waste not a thought on the coming night, but look upon sleep as a tedious interval that bars us from the light of another day. How different with old age! the slow-coming evening steals upon it like a gentle sleep, and brings with it the silent hours of repose, and the morrow is received as a welcome and long-expected guest, met staidly on the threshold, but not with that riotous and breathless bound with which youth rushes out to receive him.

Godfrey Malvern then was no longer the unknown stranger, the poor neglected village schoolmaster. His name had already become famous; it was blown abroad through the whole borough,—nay, had even reached the surrounding hamlets, and near upon a thousand people praised his poetry. Happy Godfrey! he was now rich in fame. But fame guards her laurels with a jealous eye, and distributes only here and there a leaf with a niggard hand; and there were rivals who disputed his sway in this little hemisphere. Flat, the singer, had also his admirers; he could draw together a greater crowd to listen to his deep bass voice than Godfrey could keep together for a single hour, brooding over his poetry. And Johnson, the celebrated cricket-player, —let it but be once rumoured that he was about to bowl, and out rushed half the borough. And Shake, the dancing-master, had only to announce a ball, and the little assembly-room was filled to suffocation;

a newly-discovered play of Shakspeare's would not have drawn together half such an audience had the immortal poet himself stood there to have read it. But Godfrey noticed not trifles like these; he received invitations from every quarter of the little town to tea, and sometimes had to hurry off to keep his engagement in the neighbouring village to supper; and more than one country squire had invited him to dinner. Young ladies and their mammas pressed upon him to publish a little volume of poems by subscription, nor let their papas enjoy a moment's peace until they also had helped to swell out the list; and the honest old clergyman was ever moving at the head of the matter. The deeply sentimental stuck to Godfrey; the socials followed the singer; the gay and the light-hearted still adhered to Shake; while the cricket-player, whenever he chose, carried off the immense majority: still there were those who patronised one and all.

The dear young ladies were, however, Godfrey's firmest advocates. They never went out to tea, or returned from a morning visit, but some one or another of them obtained for him a new subscriber. God bless them! they were, after all, his sincerest friends. Then they laid out little tract-like-delivery circles · one took this street, another that row, and a third the big and ostentatious houses. They knocked at doors and pulled at bells, inquired after healths they had long forgotten, introduced all odds and ends of local news, exhausted the fashions and the weather; and then came round to Godfrey and his poems; and finally to the coveted half-crown. Sometimes they met surly old maiden-ladies, who had exhausted their all, the previous winter, in contributing to blankets and soup; who had given up reading poetry, and taken to distributing tracts; or become donors to religious institutions, founded for little babbies, that come into the world, nobody knows how, but when grown up, are

> "Pinched and pitied, thumped and fed,
> And duly take their beatings and their bread."

With such as these, the affair was hopeless; to read poetry, was wicked and sinful,—so many poor as there were without tracts,—so many blacks unconverted abroad,—so many islands without a single missionary.

"Do but think what you are doing, my dear Miss Julia Wiggins," said one of these good-meaning old ladies; one too, who had been a great reader in her day. "Every shilling you take away from such blessed institutions as ours, might, if well laid out, be the means of saving a precious soul,—some poor negro perhaps, from utter darkness:

much less has done it before now. I tremble at the state you are in!"

"But, my dear lady, I have heard you quote from Milton, and Cowper, and Thomson," continued the persevering Julia; "have heard you confess that you have read Shakspeare, and Scott; and that in no works can we gather so much knowledge of human character, as in the last two writers. True, it is some time since; but I marvel at so great a change as your mind seems to have undergone."

"I had not then sat under the ministry of the blessed Barachiah Bumpus," replied Miss Georgiana Sophia Slate, who had now turned fifty,—"had not duly considered that all knowledge, save such as serves to convince us what wicked and sinful creatures we are by nature, is of itself a sin;—nay, even to the gratifying of the least worldly wish, is an evil. Now, I have read a few of this young man's verses; and my wicked inclination would lead me to read more, did I not oppose it; and this, the Reverend Mr. Bumpus has convinced me, is nothing less than the power of the evil one, who seeketh to draw me away like a sheep from the fold; and that the same is a thief and a robber of righteousness."

After this, she took a hearty pinch of snuff, then proceeded to fill up the couplet on the large white cushion, with little pins, and which was fast drawing to the following finish;—the whole made by the Reverend Barachiah himself:

"Life is short, our days are but a span
Long: the infant, if it lives, will soon become a woman or a man."

Sister Slate had to go half round the huge pincushion with the last line; albeit it was somewhat shorter than the couplet quoted by the facetious Tom Brown, who swears that the last line went round a room; and which reads as follows,—

"Pharaoh, king of Egypt, was a downright *rascal*,
Because he would not suffer the children of Israel to go out into the wilderness, when they wanted to eat the Feast of *Pascal*."

Let it not be thought that in Sister Slate we are attempting to ridicule any really good conscientious christian. It is but the cant and humbug of the world, that we shall daringly seize upon in the course of this work. That hypocrisy and hollow cant which is daily and hourly inundating England, and washing away every manly and noble vestige, that for ages have stood like proud landmarks, in this proud old country. What has worn away the manly integrity of our forefathers, and almost changed the very nature of their sons and daughters?

Paltry fashion, empty cant, and vile worldly hypocrisy. We live more delicately than they did; we move more mincingly in our gait; we utter not such good, round, fearless English words as they taught us to utter; we read not what they read. Their solid oaken dramas are thrown aside for paltry pantomimes; their sound old iron-bound divinity, for paltry pennyworths of religious cant, the very reading of which seems to choke a true Englishman. We no longer listen to huge, plump, heavy-sided parsons, who would either kick or convert their audience. We throw away the moral mirth of Fielding, Sterne, Smollett, and other literary giants, who wrote with pointed spears upon enduring rocks; and in place of these, take up books, which break only butterflies; which show up the present little generation of grubs, and 'eke the caterpillars,' as honest Sternhold and Hopkins have it. But there are still a few noble fellows in the land. God bless them!

CHAPTER VIII.

GODFREY MALVERN PUBLISHES HIS POEMS; AND IS CHOSEN EDITOR OF THE BUTTERVOTE MAGAZINE:—A GLANCE AT PARTIES IN THE BOROUGH; AND A BROAD VIEW OF OUR HERO'S AMBITION.

'STRANGE, but yet most true,' Godfrey's poems at last appeared, and made no small stir in the borough of Buttervote, and its surrounding neighbourhood; (but more of this hereafter.) Suffice it to say, that he had by this time obtained so much notoriety, that a war was entered into by the rival editors; and to this day, it is still a dispute which of them had the best of it. They went as far back for their materials of abuse, as the days of their great-grandfathers; and although one of their ancestors had been transported for sheep-stealing, he on the other side had had a narrow escape from hanging, for having uttered forged notes. So that on this point, they were considered nearly equal, although the tory editor maintained, that even supposing his grandfather guilty of the forgery, it was still the most gentlemanly profession. But letters were showered in without end, by amicable subscribers; and it was proposed in one, that as the quarrel had arisen through Godfrey having become a contributor to both papers, and that since his talents were now 'universally acknowledged,' a shilling monthly periodical should be started, embracing only subjects of literature; and

from the pages of which, all politics should be excluded; for, as the correspondent said, "shall a county like ours, so rich in dormant talent, for ever remain buried? No! awake then, thou genius of Buttervote! and dazzle the world with that brilliancy which has until now been hid under a bushel!"

No sooner said than done, as George Monk said: 'all political feelings were to be offered up on the shrine of genius; and men of talent were once more to meet as brothers, for the golden age was restored.'

The next day, the publisher of the 'Journal' issued a little circular, very neatly printed; and a meeting was held at the Blue Boar, the following evening, to take into consideration, as the circular stated,—'The financial and literary department of the new periodical.' We shall not record the speeches which were made on the occasion: suffice it that Godfrey Malvern was unanimously chosen editor; and that according to what the publisher said, England had now added another name to its immortal poets; and that Shakspeare, Milton, and Malvern, would become household words. Gruff was there, and said 'gammon!' but no one thought it worth while to reply, for they all knew that Gregory would 'say his say.'

Prospectuses were soon issued, and in came contributions from all quarters; and those who sent the worst articles, generally ordered the largest number of copies:—of course they wanted to give them to their friends, who would read them, and be very ungrateful indeed, if they did not like the contributions of the giver better than any in the magazine. Poor Godfrey! he was the worst man they could have selected for editor, for he was honest. To him it mattered not how many copies they ordered; if the article accompanying the order was bad, he rejected it at once.

When the magazine appeared, it contained but six contributors' names; if we except stanzas 'to a Bee,' 'the Sea,' and so on, all readable, providing the reader knew but little of true poetry; even Gregory Mitchell's article was rejected, and Miss Julia Wiggins' stanzas 'to a young Poet,' meaning of course Godfrey, declared unreadable. Still it was a capital first number. A paper entitled 'The Veneration of Antiquity,' by the old clergyman, though somewhat quaint and old-fashioned in its style, was nevertheless excellent; and an article by Gregory Gruff, on 'A New System of Education,' was worthy of the pages of any periodical: there was something so perseveringly wrong about it, yet so illustrative of the character of the man, that it might have passed for a quiz by Lord Brougham, struck off in a happy

moment. But the chapter written by Godfrey Malvern, 'On the Beauty of the Old Poets,' was the gem of the work; while a lighter article entitled, 'Our Borough,' had enough humour and sentiment to give it a local interest, without wounding the feelings of any one.—This was written by a clever young druggist, who soon after left England, to try his fortune in a 'far off country.'

But it is hopeless to attempt a description of the excitement in the borough of Buttervote on the day of publication. The rejected authors ran to each other's houses with the number in their hands. Sometimes they met each other half-way. "You have seen it?" "I have."—"Did you ever?" "Never"—"Not readable"—"Returned"—"Unsuited for our pages"—"Wants thought"—"Imagination"—"Devoid of interest"—"Well, come along; there is Jenkinson, and Snooks, and Atkinson in such a way, we'll start a new work." "We will"—"The puppy!"—"The ass!"—"Not suited"—"Unreadable."—That night a new committee met at the Pink Pig, and George Monk was unanimously elected as editor of the opposition magazine. The borough was now divided, blue and pink were the order of the day. Whig and Tory assembled, each under their different banners, and the papers fired away before the combat commenced;—like the war-horse in Job, they cried "Aha! and smelt the battle afar off."

Oh, what a change in the borough! Party was divided against party, and blue and pink became the rival colours of the day. The young ladies on one side dressed in pink. They made their beaus wear pink stocks; the colour of the wrapper for the magazine was pink—they would have printed it in pink if they could have done so. On the other side blue was as much in favour. The draper had to send to London for blue goods by every post. The borough was all a-stir. The rival parties looked daggers at each other; they arranged themselves on different sides of the church, and no blue or pink ever addressed each other but in a spirit of genuine abuse.

Great men did the printers become all at once. They were nodded to and smiled at by the rival powers, and every trick was resorted to by both sides to obtain 'proofs' of the matter in the magazines before the day of publication. Never was there more manœuvring during a serious warfare, to ascertain the numbers, movements, and strength of the enemy, than to know what the forthcoming magazines would contain. Every scribbler who had been rejected from the blue magazine became a contributor to the pink; and the first number was nearly filled with abuse. A drama occupied more than one-half of its pages,

—it was the production of several hands. The scene was laid in the infernal regions, while Godfrey, the Parson, Gregory Gruff, and the Publisher, were all consigned to the fire-office below. Still it was a poor affair, and the following verses by George Monk, headed by the 'Argument' which we copy, furnish a fair sample of such writing, as in the present day too often passes for poetry. They were read by Godfrey Malvern, and commented upon at the end of each verse by Gregory Gruff in the following manner. But first the argument, according to the order of the epic.

It was amusing to watch the working of Gruff's countenance while Godfrey read the argument, for at every pause Gregory gave a "Bah!" "Ah!" "Fudge!" or something expressive of his contempt. It was entitled,

"NATURE:

A Poem. By George Monk.

Author of 'Stanzas on Selina Sighing.

ARGUMENT.

"Description of vernal May—the sun shining on the green shady bowers—the crystal silver stream—The feathered warblers that come to quaff the silver stream—How the poet loves to sit beside the crystal stream, and crowned with undying flowers contemplate his immortal, eternal fame—Morning described—crowned with dew——comes in gorgeous, brilliant splendour—The rosy milkmaid fetches her lowing kine from the buttercup and daisy meads—The skylark, melodious warbler—The little winged insects hum in the gentle breeze as it whispers all among the trees—The winged warblers carol from the shady groves, and show that nature is not like degraded unthankful man—Storm arises, dreadful description of its terrific devastation—Storm over, and the sun shines in effulgent brilliancy on nature, which is described—A knight in golden armour rides over the plain—dismounts on the haunted turret, and hangs his bridle on the battlements—meets his rival—dreadful sanguine combat described—His lady fair faints during the dreadful battle—Image of Grief pulling her to the earth—The muse is weary of fame and ambition, so retires among savage wolves and howling caves to die."

"A very proper ending," said Gruff, "to so tedious a bill of fare." Then looking over Godfrey's shoulder, he added, "What, so much grace to so little meat!—come, proceed. I'm afraid it will turn out like old Dr. Simpson's headings to his chapters in his 'Herbal,' where

he says, 'The daisy—time of flowering—where it is usually found—its beautiful form described—shape of its flowers,' &c. And when you come to the text, all you meet with is, 'The daisy is known to all, and needs no description.' But proceed, my friend, and let us hear if he welcomes in May any thing like Spenser or Milton." Godfrey proceeded—

"Now doth come the vernal May,
With her fragrant-scented flowers;
And the sun shines bright and gay
On the green and shady bowers."

(GRUFF, by way of chorus, exclaimed,) "Age of ours!"

"Beside the crystal silver stream,
Where the feathered warblers drink,
There the muse lies down to dream,
Crown'd with lily, rose, and pink."
(GRUFF.) "Only think!"

"Now the morning all in dew,
With the drops upon her hair,
Sits upon the clouds so blue,
With her eyes divinely fair."
(GRUFF.) "Read and stare!"

"Now across the flowery mead
Comes the milkmaid and her kine,
And the lark, above her head,
Sings so loudly and divine."
(GRUFF.) "What a line!"

"Now each little warbling fly
Sings humming to the gentle breeze,
While the wind goes whispering by
All among the leaves and trees."
(GRUFF.) "New thoughts these!"

"Melodious from the vernal grove,
The birds tune up sweet nature's gamut,
To show to man how they do love,
And the heart—the song comes from it."
(GRUFF.) "Oh! d— it!"

"Now is heard the howling wind,
Then comes down the roaring rain,
All pitchy-black, just like the mind
When brooding o'er a solemn strain."
(GRUFF.) "What a brain!"

"Then the sun again outshines,
For the dreadful storm's a rover;
His beams fall on the trees and vines,
The apples, vi'lets, fields of clover."
(Gruff.) "Its soon over!"

"Now comes prancing o'er the plain
A knight in golden armour clad,
The haunted turret he doth gain,
Ties to the battlements his pad."
(Gruff.) "No doubt, glad!"

"Then he doth his rival meet,
And their lances split to shivers,
The lovely lady doth them greet,
While they pierce each other's livers."
(Gruff.) "Blood like rivers!"

"The lady shrieks, lets fall her rose,
And from her face flies all her colour;
Then drops down in a drowsy dose,
For Grief stands by and seems to pull her.
(Gruff.) "Nothing duller!"

"The muse now seeks the lowly graves;
For what is fame? Oh, I could cry
Come, savage wolves, and howling caves,
Farewell ambition—let me die."
(Gruff.) "Well! by, by!"

"Well," said Gregory, "I think it ought to appear again with my comments; for I'll be sworn that many an elaborate page of criticism has been written less to the purpose. What say you, Godfrey, to making it the leading article in our next magazine? I think the last stanza is most original; the thought suggested by contemplating fame is a gem, and the way in which he shakes hands before parting with ambition is something to the purpose. He's made up his mind; so finds it's no use to stand shilly-shallying. He's like a condemned man running off as if he feared he should be too late to be executed. I drink to glorious George Monk."

Still Godfrey maintained his popularity, for he had published a volume of poems, and in the borough was considered a *real* author. More than this, the periodical which he edited found a most respectable class of readers, and was taken in by the first families in the neighbourhood, for it contained what is so often wanting in magazines of older

standing, namely, originality. As for the abuse showered upon him, he only replied to it by one or two brief epigrams, and these had the desired effect. We give the following specimen: it was addressed to a wretched musician, who had attacked Godfrey in the most wishy-washy verse that ever human hand perpetrated. It was entitled—

"TO A BAD MUSICIAN.

"Hadst thou but the power of Orpheus, who moved the trees and stones,
Thou wouldst have saved my ears much pain, and long ere this been dead;
The trees would have fallen on thee and broken half thy bones,
And, if they had not finished thee, the rocks and stones thy head."

On every hand might be heard the rejected authors exclaiming against Godfrey, "Was there ever so ungrateful a monster?—to reject my verses, after I had been at the trouble to get him five subscribers to his poems! And what are they, after all? Why, Lawyer Trueside said that mine read equally as well as Mr. Malvern's; and that they wanted but a little original thought to make them excellent."

"Then to think," exclaimed another, "of his telling me, that poetry was not to be learnt,—that it was the gift of nature; that art might do a great deal in giving a finish to a style, but that the power of thought and feeling were beyond the reach of all schools. What impudence! when I paid a pound a-quarter extra, at school, to be taught to write poetry; and Dr. Stringrhyme declared I wrote beautifully, and might some day, for what he knew, attain the Professorship of Poetry."

"And they talk of giving up our magazine," replied the other, "because it does not sell sufficient to pay for the paper; and the publisher says that he has given away no end, and that numbers have sent them back, declaring that they cannot read them, and will not even accept them as a gift. But it is prejudice, my friend, prejudice; and had either you or I published a volume of poems, like this puppy Malvern's, we should have met with very different treatment."

So saying, 'each took his separate way,' and the pink magazine was soon dropped; but its failure afforded Godfrey no triumph. He would rather have had a rival in the field than not, for he thought less of himself than others did.

When Godfrey first began to write poetry, he scarcely thought of fame; the mere pleasure of composition was to him a sufficient reward: it was only when he felt himself 'hard driven in the world,' that he turned his attention to literature as a profession, hoping thereby, some day or another, to alter his circumstances, and if not for the better, to

follow at least the dictates of genius. It was only lately that he had examined himself by others, and he possessed good judgment; for he soon felt convinced that he could write as well as many authors who had already won a name. He only wanted a fair trial; that once obtained, he had resolution enough to quit the field if he was unsuccessful; but still he was bent upon having a fair trial, and that too in London. He envied not the reputation of others, his greatest ambition was to win himself such a name as they should in the end acknowledge; he aspired only to climb into the notice of such authors as those whose names he worshipped. The praise of the whole borough of Buttervote was not enough for Godfrey Malvern, for there were very few there whose opinions he valued. He had erected his own standard of popularity. The praise or censure of the press might check or forward his progress for a time; but still he was determined to persevere until he either won the praise of the first literary characters of the age; or was at last cast into the shade in silence. His ambition was high, and honest. It was not of that low and fretful nature which envies the fame others have deservedly won, for no one grew more eloquent than Godfrey Malvern when uttering the praises of the highly-gifted authors of the present day. To know and be known by such men as Wordsworth, Wilson, Southey, Rogers, Moore, and Campbell, and a few others, he considered a higher honour than the praise of the million. He never dreamed of winning wealth by his pen, for he well knew that Parnassus was a mountain, whose gold was too hard and too endurable to be worked into common coin, and that those who climb its heights must look to the bright summit, and tread its solid pathway, without bending to pick up golden gravel with which it is strewed. That the paths to fame and wealth, although they look at a first glance as if leading to the same summit, soon begin to branch widely asunder; and that he who determines to win them both, must be like a man, who having forgotten something he should have taken with him on his journey, has the courage to return for it, and is still determined to reach the same far-off stage as he set out for, before he pauses a moment to rest. For he often thought that the golden doors, which swing open and close upon the immortal spirits who quit this world, and leave their mighty memories behind, would grate less harshly on their hinges, if the spirits entered more free from the crushes and bruises of the hard world, and in return for the never-ending treasures they leave behind, carried off their common

portion of plunder. In a word, Godfrey thought that the man whose works are worshipped when he is dead, ought to obtain 'bread and cheese' while living. And here ends the chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW GODFREY MALVERN WAS THOUGHT A VERY GREAT MAN, AND SOUGHT AFTER BY VERY GREAT PEOPLE; HOW HE TOOK A LESSON IN POLITICS; DINED, AND GOT DRUNK, AND MADE A VERY GREAT FOOL OF HIMSELF, ETC.

PASS we by the publication of Godfrey's poems, and the praise; the last of which far exceeded the profit; for when the printer was paid, the author's share was, as usual, very small: as for the magazine, he never got a farthing by it either as editor or contributor. But then, as the publisher observed, 'there was the fame.' Godfrey dropped the eleven shillings and sixpence,—the balance for printing, &c., into his pocket, and went away with all his weight of fame, having still fifty copies of his poems unsold.

Now some young men, when they have published a volume of poems, or become known at all as writers, give themselves (on the strength of it) strange *airs*, bare their throats like Byron, try to be absent;—and when spoken to, start, throw back their hair, and say 'Bless me, I was—but no matter.' Such as these, we have invariably set down for veritable asses; and we here record it as a truth,—we never yet met with a solitary stanza, produced by this very remarkable class,—these Great-Uncombed individuals,—that was worth the reading. True enough, Godfrey Malvern was a little proud of the fame he had won, but still he possessed too much good sense, to make a poltroon of himself because nature had made him a poet. He accepted the vicar's invitation in the borough; ate and drank with him, and conducted himself as he ought to do. He dined with Lord Wildman, without forgetting his own station, neither ordering the servants about, nor clapping his lordship on the back, nor challenging his sister to take wine with him. The consequence was, that when he went away, he left behind him the character of being a very modest and well-behaved young man, for he

never even once recommended them to read his last contributions to the magazine.

But Godfrey Malvern did not spend all his leisure time in paying visits; for, saving the company of Emma Ingledew, he loved solitude better than society. With him, this was no affected feeling; he was one of nature's real worshippers. Although he often wrote late on an evening, yet generally he arose early in the morning; and there were times when his feet were the first that dashed away the maiden dew from the grass. He looked on this beautiful world with the eye of a painter, and stored the impressions he drew from so lovely a picture, in the heart of a poet,—he felt what he saw. From the spots in the bottom of a cowslip, to the delicate bloom on an unbroken bud, and the mealy silver on the wings of a butterfly, did he gather rich stores of nature's own true imagery, for he had a strong innate perception of the beautiful. The lowliest blade of grass, was not beneath his notice; and in the smallest moss his fancy framed a fairy-oak, with all its ramifications. He loved to wander alone, and muse in the woodlands; to stretch himself beside the sylvan brook and watch its course, now in sunshine or shade, as it cleared the gloom of the overhanging boughs, or went laughing along where the full light fell; and in its meanderings he traced wild visions, making human hopes of the bubbles, and sighing as many of them burst ere they emerged from under the shade, while others glided merrily along into the sunshine. He seemed at times to live in a dreamy world of his own,—a land of lights and shadows,—where things changed every moment,—where nothing appeared real,—yet all made up a scene of strange unearthly loveliness. His mind sailed onward at times into huge imaginary realms,—to great rocky worlds in which man had never dwelt, where the Titan and the Mammoth walked side by side, along the shores of vast seas, on whose surface the Kraken and the Sea-snake played;—and he closed his eyes while musing on such a world! Then his thoughts wandered to the scenes around him; to the mysterious forms of the flowers; the variety and beauty of the leaves, and all those wonders which nature throws profusely over her solitudes, and which men so little regard. He saw why the images of the old poets were so durable, for in them he saw nature; and how their minds, like true mirrors, caught and reflected back the objects before them. That they coined their thoughts into golden words, in letters which stamped the true meaning of what they wished to record, and left thereon such deep impressions as time can never efface; that they loved nature, and hugged her to their hearts, with no cold, formal, affected embrace, but with

such a giant pressure that the image of the lovely goddess was ever left imprinted there. He took more delight in imparting the pleasure to others which he had felt himself, amid these scenes of solitude and beauty, than he did in the praise bestowed upon his descriptions. It was not enough for him that he had visited and described some beautiful and secluded spot; he wished others to see it that they might revel in the same enjoyment. But in this, he was often disappointed; to many of them, a tree was only a tree, whether it overhung the avenue of a forest, or stood looking at itself in a stream, or rose high and solitary upon some bold hill-top; they could see no more than bark, and branch, and leaf, for they lacked the fine perception of the poet. They had seen finer trees in some park or lane; its picturesque position they could never understand.

Some have said, that true poetry touches every heart;—this is not the truth, for thousands are incapable of either feeling or appreciating its beauties. A fine, pure, poetical thought, is beyond their comprehension: it is not always so with the poetry of the passions; they can sooner feel what makes them sad, or angry, or merry, than they can one of the finest touches of description: one of those, speaking, epithets which a true poet feels, and can never forget, is unintelligible to such a class. The thigh of Ganymede, 'half-buried in the eagle's down,'—the 'wind and rain-beating dark December,'—Eve standing 'half-spied amid the thick blushing roses that blowed around her in Eden,'—the strokes of 'Ulysses' axe' upon 'Calypso's heart' when he felled the trees previous to his departure,'—'the island,' 'dark as a black bull's hide,' 'lowering gloomily in the ocean,' are beauties which only a true poetical mind can appreciate, and which hard, leaden-headed matter-of-fact men call downright nonsense.

But these were the fine master strokes which Godfrey Malvern had so long admired; and sorry was he when others could not be made to see their true poetical beauty. Indeed many passages in his own writings, were but amplifications of these great original thoughts; they were the key-stones which locked fast all he had built,—and, grey, and old, and worn as they were, they held together the few flowers he had thrown around them. But we must now turn to another scene, and change the poetical for common-life,—resigning the beautiful and the imaginative, for meat and drink, as many a true poet is still compelled to do.

The most important event in Godfrey's brief literary career had yet to come. Squire Ingledew, with his usual ostentation, had subscribed

for ten copies of his poems, bidding him, when they were ready, to deliver them himself, and he should be paid. Godfrey did, got the money, and received an invitation the next day to dinner. The scholars, much to their satisfaction, had a half-day's holiday on the occasion, and the poor schoolmaster went to dine with the wealtniest man in the neighbourhood; for, as editor and author, he was now considered to be 'somebody,' nor was he altogether a stranger to the squire. Godfrey was shown into a splendid room by a blue-and-silver servant, and there left to gaze in wonder on the books which were never read by the squire, and on busts, the names of which he never knew. There was wealth and taste well combined; but this had been done by the former owners of the hall of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, the plate-glass and the gilding only had been added by Squire Ingledew. Godfrey gazed in astonishment at the vast pile of books around him; and while he was busied in looking over the titles so richly emblazoned, the door was thrown open, and the proud proprietor entered, with his beautiful daughter hanging on his arm. He extended his hand to Godfrey, and held out that coldest emblem of all reception, two poor patronizing fingers. These our author, of course, touched, and felt at the moment how unlike was that chilling familiarity to the warm pressure of the parson's, and the manly grasp of Gregory Gruff. "My daughter, Mr. Malvern," continued the cold, proud man, with a starched bow; "but you have, I believe, met beforetime at my worthy friend Mr. Preedom's."

Godfrey said something, he scarcely knew what; and when he took hold of Emma's hand the colour mounted his cheek, for hers was a warm friendly pressure,—oh! how unlike her father's. She gazed on the young poet a moment, then glanced upon the floor, while her neck and brow assumed the rich hue of the apple-blossom. But her father was talking all the while, and noticed not this modest confusion.

"I have read—that is, I mean my daughter has read to me, one or two of your little pieces, Mr. Malvern," continued the squire; "and I think—that is, I am no judge of poetry; if I were, I should feel no hesitation in saying that you write very smoothly, and that I could scarcely distinguish any difference in your versification from that of others who have written in the same style. I have read a little of Pope and Homer, and think they are about equal. At least—I am, as I tell you, no great judge of these matters, and I never pretend to decide upon what I do not understand. But you have dined with Lord Wildman, I hear: and I fear, after so pompous a repast as he

would set down before you, ours will seem but homely fare. However, to such as I have to *give* you are welcome. The dinner-bell has already rung. Emma, my dear, you will show Mr. Malvern the way;" saying which, he went first, like a great man as he was, and left them to follow arm-in-arm.

Lord Wildman had invited Godfrey to dinner, without either apology or preparation, neither displaying his plate, nor praising his wine. Squire Ingledew had invited Godfrey, in order that he might make a grand display; thinking, of course, that our hero would run to tell every body how much finer a dinner the squire gave than the lord—but he knew not the nature of his guest.

"Take soup?" said the squire, himself replenishing our hero's rich china dish. "This is real turtle; I had it from the first house in London. I flatter myself you had no better at Lord Wildman's?"

Godfrey innocently said, "There was no soup on the table when I had the honour of dining with his lordship."

"No soup! why I give *my* servants soup every day," said the squire smilingly. He then proposed taking wine with Godfrey, naming the five or six different wines which were at hand. Godfrey, of course, took only sherry. They nodded to each other, then fell again to their soup. Turbot and salmon came next; the salmon the squire sent away in a rage, declaring it was spoiled, and adding, that if the cook did not mind better in future, he should give orders to his steward to pay him his salary and discharge him at once. "It is a great annoyance to me, Mr. Malvern," continued the pompous man. "No gentleman in the county pays higher salaries than I do, and yet I can scarcely get a thing either fit to eat or drink. John, this sauce is nearly cold; take it away, and bring me the next hot. As I was saying—if you do not fancy the turbot, Mr. Malvern, we will have the next course—I hope you will find the venison tender. Emma, my dear, a little duck?" So he ran on, praising and censuring every course as it appeared and went, until the rose-water was handed round, and the heavy dessert came in.

But we will not dwell upon the blunders our hero committed at the table. How he helped Emma to the wrong sauce, and drank his champagne out of the same glass as he had done his sherry. How he spread his clean white handkerchief on his knees, and made no use of his napkin; took up a knife to his fish, then remembered himself and seized the bread and silver fork. He had before sat at 'good men's feasts;' but the presence of Emma Ingledew seemed to bewilder.

him. At length she went away, to amuse herself as she best could until tea-time. The wine was pushed briskly about, and although our hero at first drank but little, the squire spared not the bottle. The wine brought out the man, and he told Godfrey what such a piece of plate had cost him; what quantity of wines he had in his cellar; how many horses, hounds, and servants he kept; what sums he gave away yearly; how many hundreds he expended in house-keeping; and how many acres of land he possessed. And Godfrey listened to him patiently, and could not help remembering that his own income was forty pounds per annum, paid quarterly. Then the squire went further, and letting 'the cat out of the bag,' acquainted our hero with his intention of putting up for the borough of Buttervote at the ensuing election.

"You will be of use to me, Mr. Malvern," continued the squire, now something less stately to his guest; "and I shall pay you well for what you do, and from this time you may consider me as your patron; and depend upon it, you will ever find me a firm friend. I may promise less, because I like to do a thing without much preface; but you will see that I shall perform as much or more than many of these titled people, whom the world is so eager and mad to run after." All this the squire promised without solicitation or hint from his guest.

There is a kind of neutral ground which talented authors will ever occupy; and although they may never become what the world calls 'gentlemen,' in the worldly sense of the word, still they will always be received and treated with respect, by those who move in the highest circles of fashionable society. The secret of this rests in fashionable people soon growing wearied of each other's conversation; and when it comes to this, they must have something fresh to attract attention, and then they endeavour to gather around them new and thinking minds; and almost any literary man, who can 'show off,' may make sure of a supper: in London especially, this is the case, and if he cannot become a lion, he may nevertheless display himself as a very promising whelp. Although Godfrey knew but little or nothing of matters like these, still the sound of 'patron' grated harshly on his ear; indeed he was ungrateful enough to think that the squire might have kept back his proffered friendship, until he himself solicited it. Another thing, there was something painful to the young poet's feelings in this sudden familiarity; he would have felt much more comfortable had the squire kept up the dignity which he at first assumed, for Godfrey liked not to pay back compliment with compliment, or to be constantly saying,—

'I thank you,' for empty promises: he disliked being treated like a beggar because he had published a book, so he drank to comfort himself. Squire Ingledew never put himself out of the way in his life, unless he had some object to attain; and when he found Godfrey did not respond so readily to his promises, as he had anticipated, he soon turned upon another tack. Nor would he allow the wine to stand still, for he had determined his guest should drink; and he proposed the clergyman's health; this, Godfrey drank with heart and soul, in a bumper. He then proposed 'the ladies,' adding "I forgot we had but one." Our hero drank the health of Emma Ingledew in another bumper, and then his tongue was untied, and he soon sat foot to foot—the squire's boon companion.

"You talk of London, and magazines, and literature," said the host, in reply to the longest speech Godfrey had made; for the youth had vaulted on the back of ambition, as his spirits rose with the wine. "Name me one author who ever became rich by his labour? I will put you in a safer path:—what say you to becoming my secretary,—to commence at a salary of one or two hundred per annum? Egad! I think this will be better than authorship. You shall try your hand to-morrow in an address to the Independent Electors of the Borough; and if you must make rhymes, let them be such as the rabble will sing, in praise of me, their new candidate.—The wine stands with you." Godfrey filled up his glass, and muttered something about his ignorance in politics, and the difficulty of drawing up an address, so as not to offend some one or another of the various factions into which the borough of Buttervote was divided.

"Pooh! pooh! nothing is easier," exclaimed the squire. "I can find the matter—the manner is everything; and I think, Mr. Malvern, this you can manage. A good address must necessarily contain some allusion to everything that is now uppermost in the world of politics; but still it must mean nothing. What you promise in one sentence, you must gainsay in the next:—it must be filled with conditions. Thus, if you are an advocate for every liberal measure proposed, it is only so far, that they alter not the present state of the constitution; and that the new plans of government affect not the old. This, of course, means, that you promise nothing; and in doing so, you are safe with all parties. Your principles are, of course, those which will obtain you the most votes: thus you must seem to sympathise with the sufferings of the Chartists, for sympathy can do no harm; acknowledge the grievances the Radicals complain of ought to be redressed, or that at least they

require a patient investigation; here again you are safe: confess that the Whigs have done both much good and harm to the country; then show how, for there is no end to an argument of this nature, and no man can ever be offended with it: finally, you must come to the Tories, and this will require the most skill; but the safest way is to attempt to prove that there are none now, or that they are really the only true Liberals:—here you have a glorious field. The landed-interest must be held up, and the corn pulled down; and this you will find easy to do, by referring to one or two pamphlets written on the subject; for the authors generally have a happy knack of making something out of nothing, and *vice versa.* As to the poor-laws, the vote by ballot, annual parliaments, &c., these are matters which you are supposed to have brooded over for years without having come to any settled determination; but they will ever occupy your most serious attention, and so on. Now, my dear friend, I trust you understand something of politics."

"I do indeed," replied Godfrey, with a half-drunken shake of the head, "and would sooner sir,——" he would have said, "beg my bread on the common highway, than lend myself to such deceptive practices," but he still remembered that the father of Emma Ingledew sat before him; so finished by emptying his glass, and then adding, "I have taken more wine than I am in the habit of drinking, and cannot understand you clearly."

"A little tea will refresh you," said the squire, "or if you would prefer it for a few minutes, we will take a turn or two round the garden, before joining my daughter." They did, and the squire took hold of Godfrey's arm;—but every moment the young man felt himself grow worse; his step was unsteady, and he would have given the world to have been left alone for an hour or two, in one of the summer-houses: the greensward seemed to run in waves, and the trees and shrubs to dance around him. Emma saw our hero from the window of the summer-parlour, and rushed in instant to his rescue. "Mr. Malvern is not well," she said; "leave him to himself a little while." Godfrey sat down on the nearest seat, while Emma took hold of her father's arm and drew him aside. "You have done wrong, father," said the high-spirited girl, "in forcing too much wine upon the young gentleman; and when he recovers himself, he will think less kindly of you."

"Gentleman, indeed!" exclaimed the squire, giving a hasty glance at his guest, who now sat with his head sunk upon his breast, pale as death, and drunk as a drayman. "Had he been a gentleman, I would not have bestowed half the pains to have made him drunk. No, Emma,

he is like what I once was; and yet, if the fool is not over scrupulous," added he, again turning to look at Godfrey, "I will make a man of him; he has talent,—great talent, but with it I fear, what will be his ruin,—a deep sense of what the world calls honour. Honour, love, honour; this always keeps a man poor"

The squire, like Godfrey, had taken too much wine, or he never would have revealed what he did to his guest about politics, nor yet have dinned his daughter with the above dissertation on honour. He entered the parlour, and Emma had but little trouble to persuade him to rest on the sofa; and no sooner were his eyes closed, than she hurried out to attend on Godfrey Malvern.

Now, a poet, when drunk, is sure to play the fool to greater perfection than any other man, and so did our hero. When Emma asked him how he felt, he said, "God bless you—drank your health—Parson Preedom—and good old Gruff—couldn't help it, Emma—pardon, Miss Ingledew—would make me ashamed of myself—London to-morrow—all be forgotten—win a name—station in life prevents—image till death." He attempted to kneel, and was about to make a confession of his love, but fortunately fell with his face upon the greensward; and was soon borne away by two stalwart footmen, and placed upon a couch, on which he fell into a sound sleep. Host and guest were both drunk.

And there he lay, breathing heavily; and twice did Emma Ingledew steal in to look at him while he slept; and with her own hand she unloosed his neckerchief: she had done so for her father an hundred times, and probably saved him from choaking in his sleep, for the squire very often got very drunk indeed. She looked at Godfrey,—thought of the beautiful verses he had written,—then sighed heavily. But Godfrey slept on.

CHAPTER X.

HOW GODFREY MET WITH AN ADVENTURE WHICH SOBERED HIM; AND AFTER LEAPING 'OUT OF THE FRYING-PAN INTO THE FIRE,' FOUND HIMSELF ONCE MORE—ASLEEP.

When Godfrey Malvern awoke, it was several minutes before he became conscious of where he was. He raised his head from the sofa, and saw the soft moonlight of a lovely June evening streaming into a richly-furnished room, and he remembered, at last, how he came there. By degrees every little incident arose before him, and he hid his face with his hands, as if to shut out the vivid remembrance of the last few hours. He had not forgotten how Emma Ingledew spoke to him; the very music of her voice seemed still to ring upon his ear. Then he endeavoured to recall what he had said to her, and he remembered the words—'Dear Emma.' What followed next?—when he turned to look at her again he was in the arms of the two footmen, drunk—almost senselessly and speechlessly drunk! He struck his forehead, as if he intended to beat out the foolish brains which had led him to perpetrate such folly. He thought he could never look on Emma Ingledew again. He had fallen in his own eyes; he felt himself the most degraded wretch on earth, and he clenched his hands convulsively. What would his friends think of such conduct!—what folly had he not committed in the squire's presence! He endeavoured to recall the conversation, and felt afraid, as it broke upon his memory; but above all rose the thought, what would Emma herself think of him?—she who had committed his poetry to memory—had set his songs to music, and sung them—had made drawings from the subjects of his verse—what would she now think of him? Then a hundred little things passed before him—how in their walks she had always preferred loitering behind with him, and had asked him the names of the wild flowers she gathered; had pointed out spots, and inquired if they were not such as he had described in his verses; had borrowed his handkerchief to spread on the grass when she sat down; had made him the bearer of her parasol; leant all her weight on his shoulder when crossing a brook, or climbing a rustic stile; nay, had even called him Godfrey when they were alone. And now he dared not even look

upon her face, for he could not endure to be treated coldly and unkindly by Emma Ingledew.

Then came other thoughts: how could he, a poor schoolmaster, a poor poet, who had been compelled to accept of a subscription to defray the expence of publishing his volume—how could he be so mad as to think of a lady whose station in life was so far beyond his own —one whose father had offered to make him a secretary—to make him a servant. "This is, indeed, madness," said Godfrey, springing up from the sofa; "would to God I had never entered these walls!—it would have saved me from much humiliation." In rising up he shook from him a great weight like a heavy coverlet—the footman had 'tucked him in' for the night. Godfrey felt about for his hat, but this could nowhere be found. He groped for the door, but could not undo it—he approached the large central window, or sash-door, which opened upon the lawn, and, after some little difficulty in finding the bolts, threw it open. He stepped outside, and stood for a few moments upon the winding gravel-walk, and, saving the song of a nightingale, which 'all night long her amorous descant sung' from the neighbouring shrubbery—all around was silent; even the very trees seemed to sleep in the moonlight, so calm and tranquil was the night. He walked along bare-necked and bare-headed in the direction of the large iron gates, and the sound his footsteps made as they 'cranched' on the broad gravel-walk, seemed to awaken the slumbering silence which reigned around. Presently the deep barking of a mastiff rung upon his ear, and was taken up by every mongrel about the hall—stable called to stable, and kennel to kennel. But Godfrey was now drawing near to the gates, and thought that if once safe outside, he would leave them to bark on until tired; for he was anxious to gain his snug little room in the parsonage-house. He reached the gates, and found them locked; there was now no alternative but either to return, or climb the high park-wall; and before he had decided which to do, he saw the huge mastiff approaching—another minute and it would be at his throat. There was no time to think; a temporary fence, or 'stowp and rail inclosure' had been run up to keep the deer off the smoothly-rolled green, and with a desperate clutch Godfrey unloosed one of the rails; only just in time to strike his savage antagonist, as he was about to spring upon him. One blow, however, laid the mastiff for a moment on his side; but he rose again, and still kept up his deep incessant barking, although never again approaching within length of the rail. Other sounds followed, bark was answered with bark; then

came the report of a gun; and, finally, human voices were added to the tumult, for the whole of the squire's household were by this time aroused. Betty shrieked,—John swore,—while Dorothy the dairy-maid screamed out 'robbery!' and 'murder!' as loud as she could bawl; even the very fowls were aroused from their roost; and never before was heard such an uproar at midnight, around the hall of Sutton-cum-Bottesford. "And this," said Godfrey, as the cry swelled, and his assailants drew nearer, "all comes through taking too much wine!" And he swore, as he still swung his pole—for the mastiff became emboldened when he heard those approaching with whose voices he was familiar, for both 'blue and silver' had leaped up at the alarm. Even the great fat coachman had rushed out amongst the rest, swearing and coughing, and, like the others, half-dressed. But the pencil of 'Phiz' has pictured them just as they were at the moment of the encounter. There is Benjamin with his pistol—for Benjamin was in the yeoman cavalry, and he had courage enough to touch a trigger. There also is Peter with the poker, his only covering his breeches and his shirt. Patty in her petticoat is near at hand; and Susan with only her skirt on is just going to faint as she sees the features of the horrible murderer, who, with the large rail was coming to beat out all their brains, without giving them time to say their prayers. But the fat coachman caught her before she fell; and he looks a 'very Herod' at the villain. Then there are the 'blue-and-silver footmen,'—what the old dramatists called 'six-mile runners within the hour,' and they look much inclined to run off; even the cook has seized his rolling-pin, and is determined to defend his crust.

"Shoot him first, Benjamin!" cried the tender-hearted Patty; "then he can't hurt us so much; aim at the villain's vitals. Oh! Lord a-mercy, he'll murder us all! John Footman, you coward! will you see a woman murdered in cold blood!"

John never stepped so quickly at his master's bidding, as he did backward, when he beheld at one blow the ready-cocked pistol fly from Benjamin's hand, and saw the rail which Godfrey wielded, as it rung in the air, and came within a foot of his powdered head.

"Heave your rolling-pin at him, your cowardly cook!" exclaimed Patty, who had more courage than all the rest; "it may happen to knock his brains out, and keep him quiet a bit, till we take the villain prisoner. Oh! I wish George, the gamekeeper, was here with his gun!"

"You are very kind, Miss Patty," said Godfrey, taking advantage

of the first pause which his own prowess had made in the uproar; "and if you treat every guest as kindly, who has dined with your master, they will not trouble you again."

"Lord! why it's only the poor poet after all," exclaimed Susan, suddenly recovering from her fainting fit; "and if we'd happened to have killed him we should never have heard the last of it. Deary me! what fools we all are, not to know him!"

By this time Squire Ingledew had joined the group, and Godfrey was now sober enough, and recounted all that our readers already know; briefly adding that he regretted what had happened, but that when he awoke he thought it best to return home, as he knew how uneasy the worthy clergyman would feel if he staid out all night, as he had never hitherto done so. The squire took his hand, shook it; begged of him to make no apology; sent off a servant instantly to the parsonage-house, with his compliments, and Mr. Malvern would not return until morning; and before Godfrey had time to countermand the order, Emma Ingledew herself stood before him, and from her lips he needed but little persuasion to return to the hall.

Godfrey again recounted what had befallen him, how he awoke and knew not for some time where he was; how he was nigh being worried by the mastiff; and what a narrow escape he had from Benjamin's pistol; and how Patty had regretted that George the gamekeeper was not there with his gun. Emma listened to him, and at first turned pale; but Godfrey blended so much humour with the description of his perils as he proceeded, that at last she laughed outright, even until she showed the white rows of her pearly teeth. Her father laughed also; and for once in his life, his laughter was sincere; then he proposed a little brandy to keep out the cold: this Godfrey refused; and at two o'clock in the morning, Emma, slightly dressed, rang the bell for tea. She blushed as she seized the bell-rope, and saw her own fair form reflected in the large mirror—her beautiful hair in paper—the night-dress which she had hastily thrown on when she heard the alarm of danger; fo not until then did she remember 'how loose the lady was arrayed.' But never in Godfrey's eyes had she looked so lovely, as she laughed and chatted, thoughtless of what she said; now mixing her father's brandy and water, then our hero's tea; and in her happy thoughtlessness lifting up the spoon to her sweet lips, and both tasting of the cup that does, and the cup that 'does not inebriate.'

Then a thought struck the dear innocent girl—the hangings were taken down in the best bed-room,—the only bed that was well-aired

The green-room, so called from the colour of its paper, had but been cleaned that day, and must be damp; the summer-room, next to her father's, had but just been painted; the one over the hall, the Upholsterers had not yet finished; and in every other room, something was not exactly in 'apple-pie order!' She rang the bell for her own favourite maid, whispered her outside the door to make her own bed afresh; she herself would sleep in the best bed-room. Godfrey Malvern must sleep in the very bed which she had but quitted the hour before.

And was there not, enquires our reader, something very wrong in this?—There might be—but she knew it not; she had no mother to guide her aright; no prim governess to starch her up to the stiff forms of the world; she was nature's own erring child; and no marvel if she often did such things as were at variance with those rigid conventional laws which select society have drawn too tightly around us. Innocent in heart as a bird, she acted only upon the impulse of her own kind nature; and such dictates seldom guide us wrong, for there is still that internal monitor, which, although it shrinks not beneath the brand of the cold, grand, formal world, ignorant alike of its censure and its praise, still makes shift to keep within a circle as pure as that on which a thousand lips are ever breathing, and around which as many jealous eyes are ever keeping watch. And to what does all this over-strained courtesy lead?—to affectation:—it causes us to assume what we are not. How the abrupt entrance of even a friend, at times, paralyzes a family circle. And why is this the case? what need of all those apologies,—'If we had but known,' 'Do excuse the cloth,' 'I'm afraid you won't like this, that, and the other?' The friend sits in misery; the family wish the devil had him; and yet on both sides compliments are exchanged, and deception carried on.

She gave up her own bed to her father's guest, believing it to be the only one in which he could sleep comfortably. In a lower state of society, and with such feelings, she would have given up her plate, knife, fork, and solitary mutton-chop, if she had been compelled to make her own dinner of bread only. This may be carrying good nature too far; nevertheless it is just what she would have done. The beggar about to make a meal of the scraps he had picked up in the village, when he heard the moans of an older beggar than himself behind the hedge complaining of hunger, went and emptied his wallet at the feet of his aged companion, and acted the part of a christian and a gentleman, although the next hour saw him fasting, and again begging from door to door. It is the motive, not the manner, on which true charity, the basis of every

virtue, is founded: a boy sometimes gives a dog a crust with more of this genuine feeling in his bosom, than the proud man subscribes his guinea to some splendid charity. But these matters rest between man and his Maker; it is only now and then that they burst forth, and at some unguarded moment reveal themselves to the eyes of the world.

Turn we again to Godfrey Malvern. Our hero entered the lady's chamber, and looked at his attendant as if to enquire if there was not some mistake. The girl read his meaning in an instant, and she said, "It is my young mistress' room," and added with an arch smile, "but I hope you will not sleep the less soundly for that—so good night, sir." And a fitting nest it was for so fair a bird, all 'saintly-white, like driven-snow.' There stood the mirror which had a thousand times reflected back her lovely image; there lay the little tortoise-shell combs, just as she had thrown them down, when she bound up her brown silken ringlets; her beads and brooch were there, and Godfrey took them up, and pressed them fondly to his lips. On the table was laid his own poems; a flower (one which he himself had gathered) marked the page where she last read; there also lay her unfinished drawing from one of his verses,—the laden ass; the shepherd lad driving his lambs; and above the hedge, the old carrier's tilted cart.—Godfrey snatched up the pencil, and put in a few masterly touches, which gave a softness and a beauty to the distance; it was very wrong, but he did it without a thought. By the window stood a pot of wild flowers, the very same which he had helped her to gather during one of their walks. There also lay her guitar; her music; some of his own songs copied by herself; and on the back of one of these sheets, was a slight sketch of his own likeness;—the outline of the face was excellent. Godfrey felt he had done wrong; and although alone, blushed at the discoveries he had made. How changed were now his thoughts! He felt himself unworthy of her! What proofs were these! Her admiration of his talents was not affected; he saw that his veriest trifles were treasured by Emma Ingledew. He stood there a changed man; he felt the forlornness of his situation,—the humility of his position. What had he to offer her but a true heart, or, if even accepted, but to bind himself for ever as a slave to her father,—to a man whom he disliked,—and yet he scarcely knew why? And what might be her father's conduct, if he once aspired to the hand of his daughter? He already heard the laugh,—the sneer! saw the proud man draw himself to his full height, and order him out of the room. No! he would rather die, than subject himself to such degradation! There was but one cure,

—he would tear himself from the place; try London and literature; and when he had won a name —— His eye lighted up as he caught a glance of himself in the mirror; and in an instant he extinguished the candle; but it was long before he fell asleep.

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH WE TAKE A HASTY GLANCE AT LOVE—THE BOROUGH—BRIBERY—ELECTIONS—WOMEN—AND THE DEVIL—AND STILL KEEP IN VIEW OF OUR HERO.

It would add but little to the interest of our story, to follow the steps of Godfrey Malvern day by day; to recount the progress he made in poetry, in drawing, and above all in the favour of Emma Ingledew; nor did he seem to sink the least in the estimation of her father, especially after he had learned a little more of the 'art of drinking.' Still the young man's conscience often reproached him; for although he now enjoyed more of Emma's company in that of her father's, he felt that he was neglecting the kind old rector; that he paid not such attention to his school as he ought to do, nor so many visits to his friend Gregory Gruff. Be it remembered, however, that he had 'told his love;' that Emma had laughed, looked serious, then cried and confessed her own. But it is an old story, and, as the old song says,

"He loved, and was beloved again;"

and this saves us from writing a good deal of the sentimental. His dreams were that he should become famous as an author some day or other; marry her, whether her father was willing or not; and then live —— Alas! Godfrey, it might be in a garret; or, as they say in London, 'the last pair back.' After such a confession, they of course become very intimate—there were very few secrets between them. Godfrey complained to her at times of the hours he was compelled to waste with her father over the bottle. But what could she say, since her father allowed them to be together whenever they pleased, and never once made a remark upon their being on such familiar terms. It might be his thoughts were too busied about the forthcoming election; or it might be —— but nobody either knew or cared what;

although every one saw the footing which Godfrey had obtained with the squire's daughter.

But we must introduce one little scene between the lovers, which took place while Godfrey Malvern and Emma Ingledew were walking in the garden, when their conversation chanced to turn upon the past, and they ran over their early histories, 'e'en from their childish days.'

"I have some faint recollections," said Godfrey, "(though they come upon me in broken glimpses, like the half-remembered images of a dream,) of passing my early days in a large old-fashioned mansion, like this which your father inhabits. When I look upon the old portraits in the hall, I fancy that I have seen them before, or something like them; even the worn escutcheon over the gateway always arrests my glance whenever I enter the park, like something which I had often seen in my childish days."

"I have often thought," replied Emma, "that some time in your life you were in very different circumstances to what you are now. You seem ——" but the lovely girl checked herself, for she would have said—"to have been born of gentle blood."

"I one night mentioned these half-dreamy reminiscences to your father," continued Godfrey, without regarding what she had said; "and he asked me many questions, which I was unable to answer. I had, however, a remembrance of being removed to London, and how I was lost for several hours in its streets, having, I believe, slipt my hand out of my mother's while in a shop, and long passed the door before I was missed. We lived in a large house, and I remember losing some friend. Whether it was my mother or not I know not now; but they dressed me in black, and told me she would soon return. And I remember a large room that was hung with black, and that I saw a long train of dark coaches and horses from the window. And soon after this I was sent miles away to school. I think it was not my father who took me there. Nay, I have often fancied that his face resembled one I have since seen; and yet it seemed like the countenance of another. Your father was deeply affected while I mentioned these things, as if he took a great interest in me. I had never before any anxious wish to be known only as a poet; but since my acquaintance with you, Emma, I should like to prove that I am by birth a gentleman, though I am convinced that birth alone does not altogether influence the character of the future man; and that any of us, if we strive, may stamp our own nobility. And that to make yourself a

good and glorious name, is far nobler than to be born with one, which in the end is brought to disgrace."

"Never mind what you were, Godfrey," replied the squire's daughter. "Were I convinced that you were born a prince, it would only make me unhappy, through the fear that I might one day lose you; nor could I then love you more than I do now. Were I to know that your parents were beggars, it would not alter my affection for you; for the lowly cottage has before now sent into the world as noble-minded men as ever issued from the high archway of a castle; and I shall be prouder to be the wife of a poet, than the bride of a prince. But if you should turn out at last to be a great man by birth, Godfrey," added she, placing her hand familiarly on his shoulder, and looking into his face as she spoke, "you would not forget your fond and foolish Emma!—would you?"

"When I forget thee, my love," said Godfrey, throwing his arm around her neck, and kissing her as he spoke, while a tear stood in his eye;—"when I forget thee, my Emma, may I be forgotten by God, and my name blotted out for ever from that book in which all our good deeds are recorded! No! I feel that thou art twined like ivy around my heart; and may that heart never beat again, when I attempt to release one grasp of the fibres which clasp it—may that deed be my death!"

He kissed her again, and looked up to Heaven in silence; and, although he spoke not for some moments, yet his lips moved as if in prayer,—as though he intreated the High Powers to confirm the curse he had called down upon himself, if ever his heart changed towards the beautiful girl whom he then clasped to his bosom. Emma wept, for her little heart sobbed as if it would break.

"I can but just remember my mother, Godfrey," said Emma, when she had somewhat recovered herself, drawing forth a little purse as she spoke; "although I have sat for hours, and like you endeavoured to call up the features of those who are now no more. But still I love her memory, and what I can recal of her, seems dim, indistinct,—yet lovely; and at last loses itself in heaven. But it is a ladder on which my fancy climbs like the angels of old; and on its steps I seem to ascend to her, even in my dreams. She left me this ring," added she, producing a richly-chased mourning ring; "it was once my grandmother's; it is the only relic I hold sacred, and is too large for me. I cannot take out my heart, Godfrey, and give it you, to show how much I love you. But this ring shall be the representative of that heart. Come, hold out

your hand; and now, as I have got it on your finger after some trouble, never take it off again. Sleep in it, write in it, never take it off; and promise that no living soul, shall, saving myself; and I will also swear never to ask for it again until I cease to love you. But if I die first, let me have it on when I am buried; and you shall wear my wedding ring in its place."

Godfrey agreed; and so these children of love, toyed and played with each other. God bless them both! They were indeed like children—like those who wander forth hand in hand, to gather shells on the smooth shores of an uncertain sea,—who walk on happily and almost thoughtlessly together, until they reach a little island, only laid bare when the waters are low, and there stop and amuse themselves—that little spot being to them, for the time, all the world. Pleased with each other, and amused with the toys they have gathered, they mark not the silent tide, which steals on ripple by ripple, and leaves at last only a wide waste of water all around; this they discover not until the round sun is sinking down, and the dark night heaving up upon the heavens. Then they hear distinctly the lapping surges drinking up the dry sands inch by inch; and see in every wave the broad tongue of the monster, that comes crawling on to devour them. But every star has an angel to guide its course:—there are millions of watchful eyes in heaven; and Providence can as well put out its arm to the rescue, in the darkest night, as when the unclouded sun heralds the way, and points from his throne to where the lowliest earth-worm struggles in its little agony; for

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."

The mastiff no longer barked at Godfrey when he staid late at the hall; neither did the servants again call him 'the poor poet.' He sat late with the squire on an evening; ate, drank, and made merry; drew up addresses for the election; wrote squibs which made the squire laugh; and went so far as to solicit votes for his new patron, and oppose his old friend, Lord Wildman. Although Godfrey did not really do the 'dirty work' which is now done at almost all elections, and must be done until something better is devised; still it was known on what intimate terms he stood with the squire; and while his very soul revolted at the bribery and corruption which he saw carried on daily, he at last became so hardened as to look upon it merely as a matter of business. Besides, what harm was he doing, if he but repeated what he had heard,—how the other party had offered such a man ten

pounds,—and how his 'principles' (such is the phrase) went with the squire? but then the man was poor, and could not afford to throw ten pounds away for his 'principles'—so he had fifteen, and the squire another 'independent vote.' And it was wonderful to hear how the wealthy owner of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, reasoned upon such matters; showing the close approximation of conscience to self-interest; and how it was the duty of every man to make the most of what he possessed. "Were you to write a book," he would say to Godfrey, "and offer it to some bookseller, would you not get the most you could for it?—had you a house or land to sell, would you not do the same?"

"But conscience, honour, principle,—the bartering of *these?*" said Godfrey.

"Stuff! nonsense!" was the squire's reply; "they but sell their voices, and that is all they have got to sell:—you may say they sell themselves; if they do, it is only for a few years; every new election brings a new buyer, and conscience butters no bread."

Godfrey knew all this was wrong, but he attributed it to the system; and woe be to a system, when it is given up as past all cure,—when it is allowed to go on, although all acknowledge that it is becoming worse and worse,—complain, and yet prop up its very decay!

The squire went round to solicit the votes of the free and independent electors, and Godfrey accompanied him on his canvass; and then he saw, for the first time in his life, what a thorough-paced man of the world can do; and our hero was astonished. The squire took up little children, whose lips were encrusted with bread and treacle, and dirt, and kissed them on the threshold, stroked their little heads, and gave them crown-pieces; shook the waxy hands of coblers, and the buckhorn fists of blacksmiths, and actually sat down in one dirty house, and partook of some hashed-mutton with a tailor. Thus he won 'golden opinions' from almost all; besides, he possessed a good deal of property in the borough,—and here, he promised the renewal of a lease,—there, a new front to a shop,—further on, a door, and a coat of paint,—gave a ten-pound note in payment for a pair of new pumps, and said not a word about a 'plumper' on the day of the poll, although Godfrey observed there was a good deal of shaking hands, and many a 'yes,' 'yes,' in answer to some whisper. Then it was wonderful to see the interest the squire took in the elder children,—what enquiries he made about their writing and accounting,—how he looked at, and admired their copy-books,—shook his head and muttered something about this friend the banker, and that friend the lawyer,—spoke about the Cus-

toms, the Admiralty, and Somerset House, until Godfrey wondered where he had picked up all these friends, and marvelled much that he had not met with some of them at the hall of Sutton-cum-Bottesford. But the squire had long been a mystery to the natives of the borough; and now it was whispered that he had great interest in London. Nor was Godfrey without his share of notice; for many now praised his writings who had never read a line of what he had written; and others wished he would open an 'academy' in the borough; while some whispered together and said, "You see how it is, he will neither need school nor academy again, but will ere long be the squire's son-in-law." These knew but little of the squire, neither did they know that those addresses stuck upon every wall and pillar, which promised everything, and meant nothing, were the production of Godfrey's brain when swimming beneath the potations of the bottle. Alas! his honour and his genius had prostrated itself before the beauty of Emma Ingledew, and there were moments of reflection, when he hated himself for what he had done:—although he loved her fondly and devoutly, yet he despised the double-dealing of her father,—and especially on the night after the canvass, when the squire, elevated by his success, made more free than usual with the bottle.

"Come, fill your glass, Godfrey," said he, as they sat together. "I think it will take a whole butt of claret to wash away the taste of the tailor's hashed-mutton and onions. Pah! what a mixture! and yet those few mouthfuls saved me twenty pounds, and won a vote into the bargain. How I despise the fools! One rascal, a preacher too, talked to me about his conscience, and then offered me his vote if I would give him five pounds more than my opponent;* telling me that he had prayed to be shown on which side to poll, and that his prayer had been answered in my favour. This fellow would have risen to the rank of colonel had he lived in the times of Cromwell. Well, well! the world is a chase, and it is 'catch who catch can,' and we must all either hunt or be hunted. Come, man, drink! let poetry alone for one night; you will find yourself famous enough before long. Egad! I think half the girls in the borough are either in love with you, or your poetry already. Never did I hear mortal before so be-praised as you were to-day."

And so he ran on,—now rallying Godfrey on his lowness of spirits,

* This occurred at the last N—— m election. The 'conscientious' elector was a dissenting minister, and is well known. I heard it from the lips of the very individual to whom he offered to sell his vote for fifteen pounds.

then laughing at the way in which the world was humbugged, and chuckling at his own proficiency in the self-same art.

It need not then be wondered at, that under such a tutor our hero imbibed a few one-sided maxims; or that when he heard conscience, candour, honesty, and honour laughed at, he at least learned the art of keeping many of his thoughts to himself, and so far deceived the squire, as to leave him to conclude that in many things he coincided with his views. And trifles lighter than these have altered the character of many a one, who was originally a good man. For no matter on what occasion, but if we once commence to 'play into another's hands,'—to confirm what he says merely through a fear of giving him offence, when our own views of the matter are opposed to his,—from that moment we play a dishonourable part, and are to a certain extent, deceivers.

All have not such temptations as surrounded Godfrey. He had a young, beautiful, and innocent girl on whom his heart doted; and he knew that nothing gave her more pleasure, than to see him on friendly terms with her father. And many a high-minded and honourable man would have pardoned him for acting as he did, had he but once looked upon her beautiful countenance. In the ways of the world she was but a child; she could not conceive how her lover could ever act wrong while he did what her father sanctioned. To see Godfrey under the same roof as herself,—to behold him day after day in close communion, and on the friendliest terms with her father, was happiness enough for her: for she knew not the price that her lover was paying to purchase her this pleasure; she knew not the heart-aches, and the humiliating pangs he underwent, when 'communing with his own heart.'

For her sake, and hers only, had Godfrey Malvern turned political orator; had drank with the commonest blackguards in the borough; walked arm-in-arm with the worst ruffians during the processions; sat in low smoky tap-rooms with the most disreputable characters—the hired rabble who are mustered to shout and molest every body who dare to entertain opinions contrary to those which they are paid for advocating. No marvel if, after mingling with such uncongenial companions as these, he felt many a bitter pang; that horrid sickening sensations came over him when he retired to his own little room in the parsonage-house. And many a time did he unbosom his feelings to Emma; and when she had no words of cheering comfort to offer, she hung fondly around his neck, and one pressure from her sweet

innocent lips kissed away all previous troubles. Neither could the dear girl enter fully into his peculiar feelings, for he loved her too well to cause her a moment's pain; and when he did dwell upon such traits in her father's character as he disapproved of, it was done in such a delicate way that she scarcely comprehended his meaning. Here again Godfrey did wrong; but his very love caused him to deceive her; he could not have acted otherwise without giving her great trouble, and in this his heart pleaded in its own defence.

Once only did he touch on the string 'on which hung all his sorrow;' it was on the evening of the very day on which her father had won the election, and Godfrey had returned from the borough before the squire, for the din and tumult which infested the place had half distracted him. It was twilight, and they were still walking arm-in-arm round the beautiful garden, its silence broken every now and then by the loud huzzas and drunken merriment of the different parties who were returning from the election. Emma had just spoken words of comfort to her lover, and expressed her gladness that the contest was at last over.

"It is," said Godfrey, with a sigh; "and your father will no longer need me! Pardon me, Emma; I would not offend you for the whole wealth of the wide world! you know I would not. But to-day, when he entered the town-hall, after he was chaired, he shook my hand coldly, and hoped that when I found leisure from my labours in the school, I should not forget to call on him. Emma! he no longer needs me, and for this I was prepared. I have answered his purpose."

It was twilight, and Godfrey saw not the change which the countenance of his fair companion underwent, which in an instant took possession of her,—her very nature seemed to be undergoing a change,—all that her lover had before alluded to burst instantaneously upon her, and she remained silent for several moments.

After a long pause, and in a tone of voice which seemed not her own, she said—"He cannot mean this!—But his conduct can never alter mine. No, Godfrey, if you are compelled to beg your bread, I will beg with you. Your fate is mine,—whatever that fate may be. I have sworn it, and will never change!" From that moment Emma Ingledew was a firm, enduring woman; even her girlish look seemed to have vanished for ever; there was a compression about the mouth, such as had never before rested there,—a very daring in her eye, as she stood proud, erect, and one of the noblest of God's untried creatures. Poor dear Emma! she was, until she knew Godfrey, a mere child,

swayed by every breeze like a flower; she had never in her life, coveted a thing which she could not possess,—and now her lover, the only object around which her young heart had grown as it were, to be taken from her! without ever dreaming that they were to be parted:—no,—she would sooner die! Reader, remember, that the child of nature obeys only its own passions; that Emma had never been taught to make a sacrifice of her feelings; and that never, until now, had she felt how much pain it causes the heart, only to contemplate the losing of an object on which it has long doted. She was as resolute as one of the most self-willed daughters of erring Eve.

The trials of this world, prepare us, after a time, to meet with disappointments; and although we murmur, still we learn to bear them. Death teaches us resignation,—and we know that the loss must be endured; but severe changes seldom come upon us at once,—they 'grow with our growth,' for during our earlier years we feel not so acutely:—the world is all before us, and it is only when drawing towards our journey's end, that we pause to look behind. Imagine then a beautiful girl, whose course of life, for seventeen years, had run on smoothly,—whose very look, for the last two or three years, had been obeyed,—who had never been moved by any other passion than that of fond, tender love,—imagine her, for the first time in her life, struggling to hold all her heart ever really coveted,—then you have before you the picture of our heroine on that very night:—the meek archangel entering the combat against Satan!

She shed no tear, she heaved no sigh, but shook the long ringlets about her neck, like the mane of a young war-horse; she trod the gravel-walk with 'a firm, fiery step;'—she looked like an 'angel' in a 'devil' of a rage! And her little tongue, oh! how it went! she talked of cottages and crusts, bread and water, and weary wanderings, as if such things were really delightful to endure;—and (oh! we write it with reluctance), said more against her father in five minutes, than Godfrey had ever hinted at during the whole course of his courtship. To paint human nature what it really is, we are compelled to use these dark unsightly colours. It was a strange way of what they called 'adding to their beauty,' when, a few years ago, lovely women disfigured their fair faces with black patches, as if to show that the white angel was something akin to the black devil, and was not ashamed to own such relationship.

Pardon me, ye fair, frail creatures! as Moore has wittily said—the 'errata' is, after all, the best page in your volume: you err not as

we do! there is a grace about your grossest blunders, which laughs all the care and display of man to scorn. God bless you all! and after this, we will not disfigure our chapter with another sentence, for the blessing came leaping unaware from the heart.

CHAPTER XII.

EMMA INGLEDEW AND HER FATHER BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER, WHEN IT IS TOO LATE: WITH THE SAGE ADVICE OF WIDOW CLARKSON, WHO BECOMES EMMA'S CONFIDANT;—AND A WOMAN'S REASONS.

THAT night, Squire Ingledew came home an altered man, as regarded his conduct to Godfrey Malvern. And this change had arisen from some remark made by the wealthy mayor of the borough, respecting the intimacy of the young poet with his daughter. The mayor meant no harm,—he simply inquired of the squire, who his intended son-in-law really was; and then, for the first time in his life, Squire Ingledew heard that rumour had given the hand of Emma to Godfrey. This accounted for the cold, formal shake of the hand, after the 'chairing' had taken place. And now we must return to the scene in the hall, after Godfrey had gone, and Emma and her father were left alone.

Unlike his usual manner, the squire came to the matter uppermost in his mind, at once, and said, "Emma, I must no longer encourage the visits of Godfrey Malvern here, agreeable as his company has been to us both. Rumour is already busy with your names, and has given out that I have selected him for your husband, before I have ever even thought of your marrying with any one,—at least, not at present. I intend writing him a civil note in the morning, and I am sure he will see at once, how improper it will be to resume his visits here."

Now Emma was a young lady who possessed great courage, and no small decision; as to deceit, she had never had occasion to put it into practice, and her reply was a straightforward one, for she was in the right humour to answer:—"You may do as you please, father, but when I do marry, it will be with Godfrey Malvern; and whether you see him again or not, I shall. I scorn to deceive you!—But I have made a solemn vow to God, that I will marry none other than him,—and you may now take what course you please!"

The squire never did anything like another person, and her reply

scarcely caused an alteration in his countenance; he merely looked fixedly at his daughter for a few moments, then said, "When you become of age, Emma, if you are of the same opinion as you are now, I shall not attempt to oppose it,—but until then, I feel certain that you will do as I desire you. However, please yourself! I made a promise to your mother on her death-bed, that I would never thwart you in your choice of a husband; but remember, I made no promise to assist you afterwards, nor shall I, if you marry without my consent. I have no more to say, so leave me!—You will, I hope, think differently of the matter by morning.—Good night.—There, say no more now," said he, waving his hand: "if you still continue in the same mind, I cannot help it; but once more, remember you have no help from me."

Emma retired to her chamber,—but not to sleep. As yet she had shed no tear,—had not even displayed a symptom of weakness, nor was there anything approaching to what is called a sinking of the heart. All this was her father's own fault, for he had neither trained her up to love nor fear him. Up to within the last three years of his life, he had neither thought nor cared for anything, but amassing wealth together. This once attained, he aimed next at power; so that between money and ambition, he had left the mind of his daughter neglected. He loved her as much as it was in his nature to love anything earthly:—next to himself, and saving that self, he loved only her. But even she formed only a leading link in his great chain of ambition,—a chain with which his very heart was fettered, and there kept a cold, iron guard, and held prisoner every nobler emotion. It was one of his chief objects to bring down rank,—to make his daughter the hawk which was to strike at some noble quarry,—to see some proud, old, titled family bowed prostrate before his wealth, that he might look on and triumph over their fall, for in his heart he hated to see a man above him; he aspired not to raise himself to the height of the good and great, but to lower them down to his own standard,—and on Lord Wildman was his eye fixed, for, although unknown to the young nobleman, he already held the deeds of a heavy mortgage on his estate.

Deprived of her mother, almost before she felt the loss, and left under the care of such a father as we are attempting to portray, no wonder that she dared to disobey him,—that she who had seen all around only waiting to obey her slightest wish—who had never been taught that she, in her proud station, ought also to serve, should at last rebel. Hers was a nature that needed much training; her feelings were too buoyant—her passions had known no check, for as yet she had never before

been called upon to make any sacrifice,—she had never been taught to 'know herself;' and this was her father's fault.

Although this may seem at variance with the character of the innocent girl which we have before shadowed forth, a glance at the living world will show that we are not outraging nature. Bit and saddle, for the first time, the playful colt that would before eat out of your hand, and see how suddenly it changes; while, gradually broken in, you remain the same friends as before: a good rider needs not to rein in his favourite and obedient steed, by a sharp and cruel jerk.

Emma Ingledew knew not the meaning of the word 'impropriety as it is used by the fashionable world, in allusion to rank and wealth, for in that world she had never moved. Still she was not one of those who would have run away with her father's footman (as many a foolish young lady has done) merely because he possessed a handsome face; she knew her station better. But with Godfrey Malvern it was different,—his talents had raised him to a higher station, and she thought that he whose society was courted by the most respectable families in the neighbourhood, although she knew he was poor, stood at least high enough in the esteem of others, to become her husband, and a honour to her family. Besides, he was her first and only lover, although she had seen other young men, and had been addressed and flattered by their attention. But added to all this, he was the only one whom her father had seemed to treat kindly—to make an equal of: it was her father's conduct to Godfrey, which had done so much towards fanning the secret spark of love into a blaze. Alas! how very little did she know of that very father.

Emma had a confidant,—a bad one for so young a lady; she had also a favourite attendant,—what young lady is without one? Her confidant was widow Clarkson;—her handmaiden, was widow Clarkson's friend and gossip. The widow was no stranger at the hall, although the squire seldom deigned to notice her; and it was such a pleasure for her to be of any service to the lady Emma, as she loved to call her. Thus widow Clarkson had long known in what 'quarter the wind sat,' for having buried three husbands, and being now in a fair way of obtaining a fourth, she was not blind to the state of things between Emma and Godfrey. Besides, she always agreed with her dear lady Emma, that Godfrey Malvern would turn out to be somebody other folks little thought of, some day or another; for if there ever was a 'born gentleman,' he was one. Even this might have had some little effect on the susceptible heart of our Emma.

It had struck ten o'clock, when Emma put on her bonnet, and throwing a thick shawl around her, after giving orders to her maiden to sit up, took the key which opened a small postern gate in the park, almost opposite to where widow Clarkson dwelt; and hurried off to consult this triple-spliced aspirant to Hymen. The widow was up, waiting, as was her wont, for dear Mr. Gruff; for since Godfrey had of late passed more time at the hall than the rectory, Gregory had again somewhat neglected the widow, for his old friend the clergyman. This Mrs. Clarkson well knew, and wished from her heart, that Godfrey was married; then what delightful evenings they would either spend with the parson and his niece at the hall, or at the rectory, or with Sathanas himself, so as she had but her dear Mr. Gruff,—and Mr. Gruff's money, for that was all she cared for.

And to this very woman, came Emma Ingledew at so late an hour for advice,—to consult widow Clarkson on her future happiness or misery,—on what was nearest and dearest to her heart. Alas! she had no other friend!—no fond bosom on which to shed her tears—no arm to clasp her—no lip to whisper reason and resignation—and to offer woman's comfort to woman,—no one who had once felt as she then felt, who could sympathise with her—could tell her into what dangerous paths love and passion lead—that to disobey a parent, is a great crime; and to subdue our own feelings and make others happy by so doing, such virtues as the heathens of old attributed only to their gods. No; Emma came like Seraphis to the Sybil of old, arrayed in youth, beauty, and innocence, and stained only with one earthly stain, and that was 'love, still love.' But how unlike the ancient Sybil was our widow; she sent her not back to purify herself from 'nature's fairest stain,' to mourn amongst the mountains, until she felt no other wish than to acquire virtue and wisdom; she pointed not to the mystic volumes which could only be opened by one who had no wish allied to earth. No! her voice was all for love and marriage,—her mind was of the 'earth, earthy;' her grovelling, after Gruff and his wealth; although if she had but had that wealth without Gregory, she had still taste enough to prefer Godfrey Malvern, because he was younger.

The widow rose as Emma entered, seized both her hands, and kissed her several times. This is very tantalising on the part of ladies when gentlemen are present. It is gilding refined gold, throwing sweets upon sweets, metal on metal, and is bad heraldry. It somehow seems to make one restive, to be compelled to sit still and hear such a delight-battery between sweet lips, without being allowed to take part in

the contest. Not that we should have cared to have kissed the widow, although the gipsy had good round pouting cherry lips, and what Suckling calls 'bee-stung.'

Pass we the compliments,—the inquiries made and answered, even the manner in which Emma 'told her love,' and shook out at once 'the worm i' th' bud,' heightening the colour of her 'damask cheek.'

"I would not willingly wound the feelings of my father," continued Emma; "but Godfrey is more dear to me than he is. And I think it very cruel of my father to allow us to be together, as we have been for weeks; and months, and, without even giving me a hint of the matter before, to tell me all at once, as he did to-night, that Godfrey is no longer to be with us, that we are not to meet again. But he may keep his wealth; I have money which my aunt left me, that he cannot touch, and we shall manage somehow without his help until I am of age, for have Godfrey I will." This was spoken like a young lady who had had too much of her own way.

"I admire your spirit, that I do," answered widow Clarkson; "you're just like what I was at your age. And, excuse me, my dear young lady, for speaking so plain; but I always told my mother that I would have Will Cromer (that was my first husband) if he had not a shirt to his back, sooner than I would have had old Barret, the leather-breeches maker, that used to come coughing and courting, and talking about his row of houses, and patting my cheeks, and calling me 'chick-a-biddy.' No, I say, love and happiness first, then think of a home afterwards. Besides, when you are once married, they can't unmarry you again, and your father will soon come to; so my advice is, run y and have it over at once, for I'm sure Godfrey Malvern will turn out to be a real gentleman at last. He has it in his looks. Besides, look how clean his nails always are; and if you notice, he never eats only with his fork, nor you never see him take salt out of the salt-cellar with his knife, and when he meets you he takes off his hat. Now I know something of the world, my dear young lady, and take it for granted that none but real born gentlemen do these things."

Poor Emma! she could not refrain from smiling; for although she had scarcely ever noticed either how Godfrey ate or drank, yet she knew that she as often fed herself with the knife as the fork, and took up the bones in her beautiful fingers, and picked them like a christian; as for her nails they were not always of the cleanest, after she had been

rummaging in the woods for wild-flowers. But the widow proceeded, and we must follow her.

"Besides, my dear lady Emma, as I have often remarked to Mr. Gruff (who is as good a creature as ever broke bread), you seem to have been made for one another; and I really do think are a great deal alike; many have asked if you are not brother and sister. And I know Godfrey worships the very ground you tread upon. Bless you! I've seen him of a moonlight night (when I've been waiting for dear Mr. Gruff,) after you left him, walk round and round the garden, and try to step on the very spots in which you have trod, and sit on the very same place in the garden-chairs where you sat when you were with him, and touch the flowers that you had been looking at. Aye, I've watched him for hours, and if that does not show downright true love, why I know nothing about it, and I've had three husbands. Heigho!"

Emma sighed also, and her sigh came from the heart—widow Clarkson's from habit. Emma wished but for one husband, and hoped that when he died, she should at the same moment breathe her last, and be buried with him. Alas! who has not had such thoughts? Many a fair face have we seen, in our day, look sad yet lovely in crape. The heart gone to the grave—for a time; yet in a few more months the solemn weeds have been shaken off, and the widow again covered with 'newly-married smiles'—Curse thee, old poet Crashawe, for helping us to that last quotation! It is a morsel of sour sweetness, a something put in between the cup and the lip,—the sugared water that washes down the bitter pill.

"I know not how it is," said Emma, "but from childhood I was never forbidden to do a thing, without immediately feeling a strong inclination to do it. But this, I believe, arose from a disposition to tease my dear old nurse, whom I fondly loved; for there was something in the manner in which she chided me, that made it a pleasure to disagree. The same feeling possesses me still; and I might, perhaps, have done what my father wishes me, had he not held out a threat. But I am no child now to be frightened by threats."

"I'd just for all the world such a spirit when I was your age," exclaimed the widow. "Bid me not do a thing, and I was sure to do it. And my dear mother soon found this out; for she knew the only way to get me to do what she wanted, was to threaten what she would do if I attempted to touch it. And I'll give you a bit of advice, my lady. When you are married, be sure and try to fall out with your husband now

and then. Oh! it's the most delightful thing in the world to make it up again. He'll be as fond again of you after a quarrel. I used to say to poor dear Cromer (that was my first husband), that those were the happiest hours we ever passed together. It was so pleasant to sit down and say that neither of us meant anything,—then to tell over how fond we were of one another, and so keep friends after it for a week or more at a time, until it got quite tiring. And then we had another quarrel."

"But what could you find to quarrel about?" inquired Emma; "and if you were always so happy when on friendly terms, why did you seek to be otherwise?"

"Quarrel about?" echoed the widow, only catching at the first sentence. "Bless you! any thing;—there's nothing in the world more easy, when you've once made up your mind to it. Quarrel about?—why I used to come down stairs and sit for an hour or two and not speak to him. Then he used to ask me if I was ill. And I used to say, if he'd any feeling for me, he might see I was. Then he would inquire what he could get for me. And I used to say, if he wasn't a brute he would know without asking. Then he used to go out and fetch in one thing after another, but never bring what I wanted. And I used to say if he'd any feeling he would have brought what I needed at first. Then he used to get out of temper, and say I should have told him. And that was just what I wanted; for then we began to fall out in downright earnest."

Emma smiled, as she thought of her irritable friend, Gregory Gruff, and wondered to herself how he would manage with the widow, if ever she became Mrs. Gruff, and got up one of these 'delightful quarrels.' After much more similar conversation, the widow advised Emma to marry by all means; declaring, also, that in saying what he did, her father had given his consent to it; and as to doing nothing for them after they were married, 'it was all a bag of moonshine.'

So they separated. Emma retaining just the same opinion as she did before consulting the widow. Had she 'opened her mind' to her friend the parson, probably matters might have turned out somewhat different. But she had resolved within herself how to act; and, whether young or old, a woman, if she possibly can, will at last have her own way, for she always has her reasons for it.

A woman's reasons are said to be three: they are past, present, and to come; and are as follows:—'Because I did'—'Because I will'—and 'Because I should like.' The first it is impossible to get over; the second

is almost a hopeless case; and a man must be a brute indeed if he can for a moment object to the third. Then the way in which they bring these reasons to bear is every thing. A man would knit his brows surlily, and say in a deep repulsive voice, if he liked not the first interrogation, 'Because I did!' Not so with a woman; she would put on one of her sweetest looks, and half smiling say, 'Why, my dear, because I did,—and you know, my love, that's a woman's reason for every thing.' To the second a man would reply, 'Because I will: and if I don't, why'— and he would be within a shade of swearing. But a woman would shake her pretty little head, and say, 'Because I will; and you know, my darling, when I say a thing I always do it; and I never do otherwise than please you, do I, my love?' As to the third, it does every thing; for who can refuse them 'what they would like.' True enough, it has brought many a man to the gallows; yet who ever could grumble at so trifling a trial,—a thing that can but 'happen once in a man's life,' when it shows his sincere attachment to the sex? But we will multiply these three reasons at some future period, after we have married our hero, and got Emma initiated into the arithmetic of matrimony.

CHAPTER XIII.

GODFREY GETS MARRIED AND SETS OUT FOR LONDON—A GLANCE AT THE PERILS OF AUTHORSHIP—WITH A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF HIS SAFE ARRIVAL AT THE BIG BABEL—AND HIS FIRST INTERVIEW WITH A LONDON PUBLISHER.

Doubtless our readers feel as we do, and begin to grow weary of the slow formal progress which our story makes,—this piling together of chapter upon chapter, when they can clearly see that our view is to make Godfrey and Emma man and wife. So, *presto pass!*—'A ring, a license, and the thing is done,' as worthy old Crabbe says in one of his sharp-pointed passages. And done it really was, while Squire Ingledew was engaged for a few weeks with his parliamentary business in London; for Gregory Gruff took up the matter, and had the banns regularly published in a neighbouring village, the curate of which was Gruff's friend, and thither the two lovers retired during the summer holidays and as no one rose to forbid the banns, they were at last

tied together as fast as lies in the power of the law and the church to unite man and woman. Parson Preedom had refused to marry them unless they obtained the squire's consent: but this was hopeless, so Gruff and the widow set seriously about the business; and, as we have before stated, they were married, although Emma was not of age.

The space of time from when Godfrey slept at the hall, up to the hour of his marriage with Emma Ingledew, although it occupied an interval of several weeks, brought with it but few events that would interest our readers. A little poetry, painting, teaching, and much time spent in love-making, were about all the changes our hero underwent, if we except one stormy interview with the squire, who threatened to shoot Godfrey if ever he dared to walk out again with his daughter; and from that hour Emma became the aggressor, and dared her father to do his worst. He threatened to leave her penniless if she disobeyed his commands. He would have used force with her, but he was superstitious, and remembered his promise to her mother; besides, he was afraid of Gregory Gruff, and of every thing which seemed likely to bring him in contact with law. And here ends, in a few sentences, what, with a little ingenuity, would have furnished forth matter for three or four chapters. But our path leads onward amid 'thick-coming events,' to the stir and bustle, and wear and tear of this busy life—the sharp thorns and prickly stems which must be encountered, ere we can gather one rose on which to make our bed.

In our younger days of authorship, we loved to dally with the storm of a story, to mark its progress as we did that of the elements—to curl the river with the first gust, then throw the dark shadow of the cloud over the water—bend the grass, and raise a roar among the trees—send the cattle to shelter, and the farmer from his field—before awakening the gloomy landscape with one solitary growl of thunder. But that time is past—we can no longer play at bo-peep on the edge of the angry-looking clouds, when

"Loud, deep, and long the thunder bellows."

To be brief, reader, we have spared thee the reading of several tedious pages which we had written, and have now consigned to the flames. We might have done so with others which thou hast already waded through, and our book have been all the better for it; but we have work enough on hand; so, *respice finem*; and here ends our apology for beginning, as it were, our tale anew. For, as the old saw sayeth, 'When a man's married his sorrow begins.'

So they were married, and took up their residence at the rectory, from which place Emma addressed the following letter to her father in London; and as it shows a good deal of the firmness of her mind, and the stability of a character which was so soon to be put to the trial, we here give it entire.

"My dear Father;

"You have here my reasons for not accompanying you to London. I was married to Mr. Malvern last Monday. I knew it was useless to ask your consent, therefore whatever may befall it I have not you to blame. It is all my own doing, and I will adhere unto my husband until death. I have five hundred pounds when I come of age, which was left to me by my dear old aunt. If you will be kind enough to advance us one hundred of it, it is all we shall require to start us in life; for it is my husband's intention to give up his school and retire to London, and there to follow literature as his future profession; and with such talents as he possesses I am sure we shall do very comfortably. We are at present staying with Parson Preedom, and are very happy there; for I felt that I had no right to bring my husband to my former home without your consent. For whither he goes, like Ruth of old, will I go, and his home shall be my home. I do not ask your forgiveness, for my heart reproaches me not with having done wrong. It would, however, make me happier to see you treat my husband as kindly now as you once did.

"Parsonage House, "Ever your affectionate daughter,
Sutton-cum-Bottesford. "Emma Malvern."

Squire Ingledew was at breakfast when he received this letter, for he had taken a house splendidly furnished in one of the fashionable squares at the west-end of London. He read it carefully through, and just ate as much toast and drank as much tea, while perusing it, as he would have done had he had no letter in his hand; and when he had finished the reading, he threw it into the fire, saying, "Very comfortable and very happy, I dare say, they are now; but this will not last long. He at least shall pay the penalty of his presumption; and as to her, why, if she will share famine and fame with him, it is not my fault. I will, however, offer her a home if she likes to accept it, should he not succeed;"—and the tea half choked him, as he afterwards added,—"but not him—he may live on the immortality he has so long coveted. As to the hundred pounds,—no, not if it would save

their lives! nor an hundred pence will I advance them! If they will live together they may live on love; and that they will soon tire of, or I am mistaken. Well, well,—one of my great schemes is thrown to the ground; but I was prepared for it. Had you waited, Godfrey Malvern, and obtained as great a name as Byron or Scott, I might have given my consent; but now you must fight your own fight. I will look on, but meddle not. So good bye to you both, for the present."

He then took up the morning paper, and, as if nothing at all had happened, read over the parliamentary debates of the preceding evening, and soon forgot all about his daughter and Godfrey Malvern. And here, for the present, we must leave him.

Godfrey and his beautiful young bride were very happy, for

"The world was all before them where to choose."

But she had really no wish to leave the quiet village, and the kind-hearted clergyman did all he could to persuade Godfrey to keep on his school. "My home shall be yours," said the kind old man, "while I am alive. You want but little at present; one servant can attend on us all. We have room enough and to spare. The income from your school, small as it is at present, is certain. Do not, my young friend, try literature, until you see how her father conducts himself towards you. For her sake, do nothing rashly. Remember, you have the happiness of another to consider now. Take an old man's—a true friend's advice."

Godfrey did; but still he was not at his ease. Happy enough he was for many a week, for with such an affectionate wife no man could be otherwise; but he loved her too well to remain idle.

Godfrey was ambitious;—besides, how could he keep himself and a squire's daughter on forty pounds a-year? "I will win a name, and make him proud to own me." So said pride and ambition, and the feelings from which they sprung were noble feelings, for they were all centered in a love for his beautiful bride.

Godfrey knew not, that if even uncommonly successful in literature, fame is more easily obtained than wealth; that there are but very few of the most popular authors of the present day, who can manage to live in a style of comfort equal to that of a tradesman of the middle class, and that to do this they labour harder than a mere city clerk. Authorship looks pretty enough in perspective—so does the scenery of a theatre; but let the beholder once step behind the scenes, and all the enchant-

ment is gone. The happiest actor we ever met with was one d—d at the outset of his career; and the most comfortable of all authors, one who sold but twenty copies of his work, then turned his attention to a good thriving trade, and can now sit, and laugh, at the attacks of criticism and popular opinion, and enjoy his books and his home without a care. Authors and actors are ever on the rack: like Othello—

"They doat, yet doubt; suspect, yet strongly love."

These are the sentiments of one, who has now a right to give an opinion, and yet has the least cause of all to complain. A man, who, after his talents are acknowledged, takes up authorship as the only means of obtaining his bread, can then paint the perils attendant on such a profession, and draw such a picture, that every competent judge shall at the first glance, say, 'Alas! this is too true!'

Pass we then, the happy hours which the bride and bridegroom enjoyed at Sutton-cum-Bottesford,—the letter sent by Emma's father, in which he refused to advance a farthing of her legacy until she came of age, although he offered her a home if she would leave her husband. Pass we the parting scene; how Godfrey gave up his school, and so arranged matters that his beautiful wife was to follow him to London as soon as he had got 'comfortably settled.' The horn has blown,—the horses have started,—and Godfrey, with a carpet-bag, a bundle of manuscript poetry, and ten pounds in his pocket, is on his way for London. Unknowing and almost unknown, he has set out on his new career as an author.

We have no time for either pity or poetry. Emma must faint, and the parson's niece be left to recover her. Godfrey must wipe away the rolling tear in silence, as village and town are passed in rapid succession; and the image of Emma seems ever ready to spring up from his aching heart. Twice did he think he would return to her again as he saw the coaches pass, which in a few more hours would be rolling through the village of Sutton-cum-Bottesford;—return and kiss away her tears, clasp her in his arms, and remain a poor schoolmaster for ever, for her sake; so fondly, and so madly did he love her, that he marvelled to himself how ever he could leave her for a moment. The coach stopped every now and then to change horses. It was a winter's night, and very cold, and Godfrey was glad to take advantage of every pause to warm himself.

Many and various were the thoughts which crowded Godfrey's mind

as he rode towards London, and these had their attendant feelings. Sometimes he felt very dejected, his spirits seemed strangely depressed, and more than once, a tear trickled down his cheek. He thought that Emma might be alone, or in bed, weeping for his absence,—that her little heart was sobbing in the solitude and silence of her chamber; and he pictured her with the tears on her cheek, the moonlight chequering the floor, the pillow,—her hair falling loosely upon it,—and his heart reproached him for leaving her; he would have given the world at that moment, to have clasped her in his arms. Then came other thoughts, the hot feelings of pride; and he felt not the bleak night-air which blew around him, as his imagination grappled with the future. He seemed strong as a giant—he longed for difficulties—he wished to grasp something to try his strength—to measure himself beside the proudest names of the land! Poor Godfrey! he thought, at such moments, that he had only to take up his pen, and write his name on Fame's proud list; but he knew not that the pillars of her temple were wrought from the hardest iron, and that only the arm of a giant has strength enough to make even a mark upon those columns!

Then came feelings of fear, and he began to doubt whether those descriptions of natural scenery, (which he knew he could describe with accuracy, and throw over all the rich hues of poetry,) would be sufficient to make his name known. No, they would not, and he soon became convinced that human interest would be wanting. Then he regretted that he knew so little of life. Still he had seen many strange characters,—men who were strongly marked by their own peculiar manners, who seemed of a piece with the scenery amid which they dwelt,—gipsies, poachers, woodmen, fishermen; such as he had often copied when sketching a landscape, and placed them in the foreground of his picture,—could he not then do the same with his pen? A new field opened before him, and he felt that with a little practice, this might be done. He went still further,—could he not write a work in which such characters might be made the chief actors in some interesting story?—in which their peculiar feelings and passions might be called out, all bearing upon some central object, and seeking to attain it, according to their own views? He thought that there was still enough of oppression left in the world, to admit of this,—relics of feudal laws still existing, that ought to be broken through, and which even a good and virtuous man might be made to rebel against,—that all men did not become poor and wretched through their own misconduct,—and thus he at last saw the huge machinery by which mankind are moved.

Then he regretted not having worked out some of these ideas into a story or two, for he began to fear that, after all, his poetry might not contain sufficient interest to attract any attention in London.

At length morning dawned, and the dark clouds in the east, seemed to form an arched cave, at the end of which, was seen the breaking light bursting forth on the brow of a distant hill—the golden crimson wrestling with the darkness! A poetical thought burst suddenly upon Godfrey, and he muttered it to himself, and said,—

> Morning again! breaks through the mines of Heaven,
> And shakes her jewelled kirtle on the sky,
> Heavy with rosy gold.

Then Godfrey sighed, as he thought how much common prose it would require to make a dull brain comprehend the full meaning of those few words;—that he should have to tell them how Morning, a beautiful maiden, had been imprisoned all night, and had wandered alone through the mines of Heaven, trailing her garments through hidden gems, until they clung to, and hung weightily upon her; and that when she had broken through the bars of darkness, she shook her garments on the skirts of the sky, 'heavy with rosy gold.' He again resumed the broken line, and added,—

> Aside are driven
> The vassal-clouds, which bow as she draws nigh
> To catch her scattered gems of richest dye.
> The uncoloured clouds wear what she doth refuse,
> For only once does Morn her sun-dyed garments use.

Godfrey knew that the thought was poetical, but still doubted whether the general class of readers would see it. Whether they could take the image as he had done, and change the clouds to vassals, bowing as morning broke, and catching her cast-off garments, draggled through darkness, and piles of half-broken light, until morning stood a lovely maiden, looking out upon the world, even as the old poets have described her, when breaking through the bars of night. But she soon vanished, and a cold, grey light again pervaded the east: London was now in sight.

From Highgate Godfrey first caught a view of the huge city,—saw the dim smoke that rises and spreads over the homes of a million human beings. On rolled the coach towards Islington; street after street was passed; all London,—still London, until at length they entered the narrow and dangerous avenues in the city, and finally gained the low gateway of the Swan-with-two-necks, in Lad-lane.

It was a bitter, bleak, clear morning, when the coach drew up in the Inn yard. Godfrey was half-perished with the cold, when a hale, red-faced, stout, manly-looking woman, in a great-coat, exclaimed, as she held up her basket, "Oranges, oranges, fine new oranges." Godfrey felt colder while looking at them. "Copy of the morning paper,—Times, Herald, Chronicle, or Post, important express from Liverpool, latest parliamentary news, and dreadful accident on the railway!" "Almanack for the new year, only one penny," exclaimed another voice; while a little bare-footed girl, held up her lucifer-matches, and as her teeth chattered in her head, said, "Only a half-penny a box." Godfrey gave the child a penny, then turned to look after his trunk and carpet-bag. Here a new group presented themselves; and the eagerness with which each snatched at the different articles, as they were handed from the coach, seemed more like an attack of banditti plundering some traveller, and eager to make off with the spoil, than a party of porters tendering their services in the Inn yard of a civilized metropolis. The scene might not inaptly be compared to what we have before now witnessed amongst dogs,—for there was your legal porter, the master mastiff, who had a right to the yard, selecting what best pleased himself, then with a growl leaving what he could not carry off, to the share of some tolerated deputy, or leaner mongrel; while your half-starved hound stood looking on the scene with eager and hungry eye, ready to rush in, but still afraid, until mastiff and mongrel had appeased their huge appetites; and while they coveted, could devour no more.—Although Godfrey had ordered his own luggage to be carried into the Inn, still he lingered in the yard; and while he stood with his arms folded, traced in the scene before him a strange resemblance to that of the great world. For there he saw power with its strong arm and boasted right, which no one dared to dispute with, picking and culling from what best suited him,—then beckoning to his followers to possess themselves of all he thought worth bearing away; and still turning with angry eye and envious look, at what was left behind, as if he begrudged to leave even the field after having gathered in the harvest.

After breakfast, Godfrey threaded his way into Cheapside, and onward to Paternoster Row; for the bookseller who had published his poems in the borough of Buttervote, had given him a letter of introduction to one of the London publishers: it was indeed the very house which had condescended to affix their names to the few copies that were sent on sale to London.

Our hero was shown at once into the counting-house, and stood by in silence, while the bookseller read his letter. "I shall be very happy," said the publisher, having gone over the epistle, "to give you my advice respecting anything you may undertake; but poetry has become quite a drug in the market. Indeed, unless it is beautifully illustrated, we cannot even get the reading public to look at it. Numbers of editions are issued, that never pay for the paper, letting alone the printing, binding, and advertising; as for the periodicals, I do not think that there is one which pays for poetry, unless it is written by some one who has already obtained a great name. Respecting those you have already written, and some of which we received on sale, I will make enquiry, and ascertain what number we have on hand."

He retired for a few minutes, and then returned with the tidings that only two copies had been sold! Godfrey exclaimed, "Only two copies!" and turned away with an aching heart.

He was about to pass out of the door, when his attention was arrested by a middle-aged man, who having just received a parcel, which was in fact a rejected manuscript, was exclaiming to the party who had returned it, "What will suit, I wonder? I have tried poetry, the drama, began a novel, and here, 'Sketches of the Present Age.' I thought the title alone would have sold off a good edition. Well, I see I must still stick to the periodicals, for there is no pleasing you large publishers."

The publisher smiled, wished him a 'good morning,' and was soon seated at his desk, too busied in looking over the orders which had that morning arrived from the country, to bestow a moment's further thought either on the author or his manuscript.

But the author continued talking, even when he had gained the street, for he had fixed his eyes on Godfrey Malvern, and soon saw by the look returned, that our hero felt more interest in his business than the publisher.

There are, in London, a great number of literary men, whose names are almost wholly unknown to the public. Such are the writers who contribute to cheap periodicals, and now and then, get an article inserted into the magazines, too often without their name being affixed to it. Thus their talents become buried. They have issued no distinct work on which to base their reputation, and consequently can demand no price in the market; yet many of these men are excellent writers. When they have written an article, it must instantly be converted into money; and if they do not obtain their own price for it, they are compelled to take what is offered, for they cannot afford to wait until the

editors of the higher order of periodicals can decide upon its merits. Thus the article, however good it may be, is often literally pawned, for they get a pound or two advanced upon it from some quarter where it is certain of insertion; and obtain the remainder when the periodical appears, or when the proof is corrected, and it is ascertained what number of pages the article makes. These are the most unfortunate class of all authors; a friend, or a kind publisher, sometimes is found to supply their wants, until they have written a complete work, and then their abilities are acknowledged: they enter the 'ring' as it is called, obtain fame, and eventually, if they are fortunate, just save themselves from this daily state of starvation. It was one of this class, whom Godfrey Malvern had met with: they had a long conversation together, as they walked several times round St. Paul's; and at length, Godfrey invited him to dinner. At the mention of 'dinner,' a thing not to be met with every day, the poor author gladly escorted our hero to the Cathedral Coffee House, where, as he said, "you dine off the joint, and, eat little or much, it is all the same price,"—a matter which the author thought worth making known.

CHAPTER XIV.

GODFREY MALVERN DINES WITH THE AUTHOR, AND GATHERS SOME INFORMATION WORTH KNOWING—MEETS WITH THE EDITOR OF THE OLD MONTHLY MAGAZINE, AND BECOMES AT ONCE CONTRIBUTOR AND CRITIC—ALSO, HOW YOUNG MEN, WHEN THEY FIRST COME TO LONDON, OUGHT TO KEEP THEIR EYES OPEN.

The author, whom we shall call Mr. Smith, inquired of the waiter what there was forthcoming; and on receiving the information that there would be a sirloin of roast beef up in ten minutes, rubbed his hands with delight, and ran his finger along the edge of the clean bright knife, as if to ascertain the quality of the weapon he was about to wield. He then glanced narrowly at the clock, and fearing the ten minutes might be fifteen, helped himself to the new loaf, as if to stay his stomach. Godfrey amused himself by looking out of the window, and was astonished at the crowds of people constantly passing to and fro beside St. Paul's—that great avenue which drains off its many

thousands of passengers from Cheapside and Fleet-street. But, above all, it amused him to see what a number of heads were packed together, if an omnibus or any other vehicle drew up in the centre of the crossing: it seemed like damming up a stream; and no sooner was the obstacle removed, than onward rushed the human torrent, and was lost to the sight in a few moments.

Meantime Mr. Smith having somewhat 'appeased the hungry edge of appetite' with a new crust, again resumed his conversation with Godfrey.

"I must confess," continued the author, "that I have never yet had what is called a fair trial before the public; that is, I have never published any work complete in itself. This was the very reason, I doubt not, why my manuscript was returned to-day. The fact is, I had only written one chapter as a specimen of what the whole work was to be, and I dare say they want to see more; but I am too poor to complete a work without something to live upon whilst I write it;" and he then took a hearty pull at the bottled-ale which he had ordered.

"But when a work is written," said Godfrey, "is it not difficult to meet with a purchaser, if the author is unknown?"

"Sometimes it is," replied the author; "but never if the publishers think it a work which will 'take,' as they term it. Indeed there is more fair play than many would imagine in such matters. A manuscript, when read at all, is generally put into the hands of some competent judge, who is paid for giving an honest opinion of its merits. Thus you will see why all manuscripts cannot be read, because the publisher must pay for the perusal, whether he purchases the work or not, unless he is himself a judge."

"Then a good work may be rejected," said Godfrey, "simply because a publisher is not willing to expend a pound or two, in the first instance, to ascertain its real merits?"

"It may at times be the case," answered Mr. Smith, "although the publisher generally possesses discrimination enough, from the conversation he has with the author, to know whether the work (if well done) will suit him or not. You might also argue, that the person paid for reading the manuscript is not always a competent judge. But you must bear in mind, that if the reader rejected a work which another house afterwards accepted, and that such a work succeeded, the judgment of that reader would in future be held in little estimation by his employers. Here, after all, probably rests the secret why so few good works have ever been rejected, and on this also, why so many bad

ones are published. Nothing is turned away which the booksellers think can be made to pay. Opposition and rival houses will ever leave the field open to all competitors; and there is more honesty about the business than you would at first imagine, although names, when once obtained, must, if possible, be kept up, for the publishers have at times, to pay heavily for a name. But here comes the beef,—and beautiful it looks!"

It was evident that the author had dined there before; for the waiter placed three enormous potatoes before him, while only one was found under the cover which was handed over to Godfrey. The waiter had carefully cut off the brown outside of the beef; and Mr. Smith knew how to use a good sharp carving-knife, for he went the whole length of the sirloin for his slice; and knowing it would be too long for his plate, severed it in the middle; then piled 'slice on slice,' a little gravy, and he was silent for fifteen minutes. Godfrey helped himself very moderately, for during the time that Mr. Smith held his peace, his thoughts were away with Emma; and then he began to think that authorship, after all, presented many difficulties, and he regretted that he had not completed some work before venturing on so perilous a career; but it was now too late to regret.

After a while, two or three respectable publishers came into the room to dinner. Mr. Smith seemed to have scraped an acquaintance with them all; and told one where he had seen a review of the last new work he had issued; admired the illustrations with which the publication of another was enriched; and told a third how he had just received one of his works to notice. For Mr. Smith was himself a reviewer, although chiefly employed on periodicals, whose opinions were very little valued, even by the trade. Another thing, Mr. Smith had often obtained works from the publishers for review, notices of which had never appeared in the papers, according to promise. Poor fellow! hunger had overcome honesty, and he had been compelled to sell the books to raise a dinner. But these were mysteries to which Godfrey was a stranger, although one or two of the publishers had their side-joke with the poor author, such as telling him the promised review appeared in such small type they could not see to read it, and so on. Whereat Mr. Smith smiled, and took one or two enormous pinches of snuff.

After a while the editor of the old Monthly Magazine entered the room (a work which has so often changed hands, that neither its late respectful proprietors, nor its present talented editor, need fear our men-

tioning it), and to him Godfrey Malvern was introduced by Mr. Smith. The sale of the Old Monthly was at this time at a very low ebb, though it still, as now, held its rank amongst the magazines; and they who will bestow the pains to look over its back numbers, will see that the first men of the age have contributed to its pages; that the most eminent living authors of the day have written for the 'Old Monthly;' but, like the Titans of old, it had fallen from its 'high estate,' when Godfrey was introduced to the editor. But few articles were then paid for, and these oftener in promises than money; for when print and paper were deducted, and the editor drew just enough to live upon, there were but very few pounds left for the contributors.

The editor sat down, and, like the author, did justice to the roast beef; and, after some conversation with our hero, and while eating his dinner, read a small poem of Godfrey's, which he was so much pleased with that he begged to be allowed to insert it in the magazine for the forthcoming month. To this proposition Godfrey gladly consented, and was so delighted at what he considerod his 'unexpected success,' that he begged he might be allowed to order in a bottle of wine. To this, editor and author of course consented, with great pleasure.

By-and-bye they were joined by one or two of the publishers; for the editor, although poor, was nevertheless a gentleman,—one, indeed, who in his day, had sat foot to foot with the 'proudest of the land.' Further, the magazine, as now, still retained a respectable name, and the 'Old Monthly's' opinion was not to be despised at the end of an advertisement, when no better could be obtained; and however slight the notice the publishers had bestowed on Mr. Smith, they amply made it up with 'Mr. Editor,' and were really altogether a party of very agreeable and merry gentlemen. Smith told his best anecdotes; the editor knew a great deal of west-end news; the publishers were familiar with almost every author of the day; and Godfrey heard many things which caused him both to 'sigh and smile.'

One thing, however, Godfrey soon discovered,—that though the publishers laughed at many a trick played them by men of acknowledged talent, whom, over their wine, they designated 'merry rogues,' still they took care that these waggish authors never outwitted them a second time; and he soon saw that even in literature, like any common business, 'honesty was the best policy; that the man who had drawn fifty pounds on account of the work which he had never begun, and ten to one would never finish, great as his talent might be, he must be up early, to have another such a pull on the purses of the same

publishers. They praised his works, but d—d his principles; admired the mind, but spurned the man. Mr. Smith was observed to shrug under these remarks; but he called in another 'funny' anecdote to his aid, and all was soon lost in laughter.

The editor had an order for the theatre, which he kindly offered to Godfrey, stating that there was a new piece out, and begging of him just to put down a few remarks for the magazine.

"I am so ignorant of the Drama," said Godfrey, "and have seen so few pieces played, that I feel incompetent to sit as a critic upon a new piece."

"No matter," replied the editor, "what you say, will have something new in it; and I shall feel obliged if you will try your hand.— To-morrow, I will give you a volume of poems to review. A man who can write like you, is competent to do anything,—either music, theatricals, fine arts, or literature."

Before they separated, Mr. Smith shook Godfrey's hand heartily, and borrowed a crown; for the poor author had not a sixpence in the world.

Godfrey went, presented his order, and was admitted to a front seat in the boxes of one of the minor theatres; and taking out his memorandum book, made ready to take notes of the performance. He was installed critic on the first day of his arrival in London. It was a new piece; and as far as dresses and decorations went, was tolerable. It was a fine study for Godfrey; he saw the great gaps that wanted filling up; saw how unlike life the whole thing appeared; what improbable incidents were 'lugged' in, merely for dramatic effect; and how, when dialogue and reason flagged, passion, oaths, a dagger, blood, and a ghost, never failed in eliciting the loud applause of the audience. The plot,—

"If plot that might be called, which plot had none,"

rested on the discovery, by a ghost, of a robbery and murder; and to counteract this strange development, a young woman was dressed up as another ghost, to oppose the real Simon Pure. Ghost the second, not having received the sum agreed upon for the performance, threatened to divulge the whole mystery; and was of course murdered. Then came two real ghosts, with no end of sky-blue flame; and laying their shadowy heads together, after divers and sundry meetings, the murderer confessed his guilt; for who could stand against the evidence of two real ghosts? Then came a kind of opera;—the music, passable; but the 'rhymes' such trash as made Godfrey doubt, whether or not he really was in London; for there was neither poetry, sense, nor reason in them.

At length the performance ended; and Godfrey, for the first time in his life, traversed the streets of London at midnight. He had had no supper, and seeing a respectable-looking oyster-shop, entered, and ordered a score of natives, a small bottle of stout, and bread and butter.

He had scarcely seated himself, and given his order, before a very showy sort of a lady came in, holding by her hand an interesting-looking boy, although there was something of the 'knowing dog' in his looks. They had been Godfrey's companions in the same box at the theatre; and as he had once or twice noticed the child, and as the lady had smiled very sweetly at the attention he paid her little charge, she curtsied as she entered, and seated herself opposite to Godfrey. Had our hero marked her narrowly, he would have seen that her colour was somewhat of the highest, and her dress rather too gaudy. But naturally kind-hearted, he paid no attention to these matters; and bowing politely across the table, enquired "if he might be allowed to ring the bell?"

"I shall feel greatly obliged," answered the lady, smiling, "if you will be so kind; and order me in a little stout, and a score of oysters; for really, sir, the heat of the theatre has so overpowered me, that I can scarcely speak."

She did speak, however; and in so soft and silvery a tone, that Godfrey's voice seemed like thunder, compared to hers, as he repeated her commands, and gave the order.

A close observer would have noticed a curious interchange of glances between the waiter and the lady, and a stranger would have wondered at the waiter's stupidity in not attending to what Godfrey said at once; for there was something rather sharp in the manner in which he at last spoke, as he said, "Bring the lady the same as you have brought me. But, stop, sir! I can wait a few moments. Remove the dish opposite."

"Yes, sir,—certainly, sir," replied the waiter, placing Godfrey's supper before the lady. "I will bring yours in a few moments, sir." Then calling out as loudly as he could, "Another score of oysters, pint of bottled stout, and bread and butter for No. 3."

The lady again thanked Godfrey for his kindness, gave the little boy a slice of bread and butter and two oysters, allowed him to taste of the stout, then fell to with a downright appetite; troubled Godfrey, 'if he would be so kind' to order a little more bread and butter; and finished all up, even to emptying the vinegar-cruet 'in a crack.'

Meantime Godfrey was busied in discussing his own supper; and be-

Soon he had done, the lady held down her head to the child, and said something in a whisper, to which the boy replied. She then raised her voice, and said, "Oh, fie! what, a bun, after eating all that bread and butter? I never heard of such a thing! Kiss me, then, and we will go to the confectioner's next door. But, mind, you must be a good boy."

The child did as he was bid, and they went out to buy a bun. Godfrey would have ordered the waiter to have fetched one, for he was fond of children; but he thought it would be taking too great a liberty. They were a very long time buying the bun, but Godfrey had forgotten them; for he had taken out his memorandum-book, after having finished his supper, and was busied in adding a few more notes to those which he had taken in the theatre. At last he glanced at the clock, and saw that it was nearly one. He rang the bell, and, throwing down half-a-sovereign, said, "Take for my supper, waiter."

"Yes, sir," replied the waiter, ringing the half-sovereign. Then putting it into his pocket—"Two score of oysters three and four; and three bread-and-butters, four and a penny; two stouts, a shilling, five and a penny. Four and eleven, sir; that's right. Waiter, sir, if you please," added he, pushing the change towards Godfrey.

"Two score of oysters!" exclaimed Godfrey; "why I had but one, sir. How is this? You are charging me with two suppers."

"Certainly, sir; that's right," answered the waiter: "the lady and the little boy, sir. I thought they were your friends. You gave the order!"

"The lady and the devil! sir," exclaimed Godfrey, in a rage; "they are no friends of mine. Although I did give the order, it was at the lady's request. She must settle her own reckoning."

"Then you have been done, sir; that's all," answered the waiter. "The lady has been gone home this hour; and she never pays for what gentlemen order for her—she's too well-bred. I thought Silver-tongued Sarah, as we call her, had been a friend of yours. Why every body knows her."

Godfrey pushed the halfpence to the waiter, which the latter received with a gracious bow, and helped our hero on with his great coat, and he went to his inn

"A sadder and a wiser man."

He cared not a pin for the money he had been compelled to pay; but his heart ached when he thought of the woman; and he heaved a sigh as he re-called the features of the child. "And this is London!" said Godfrey, as he pulled the bell at the inn-gate. "Oh, God! how different to Sutton-cum-Bottesford."

Poor Godfrey! what with the wine, the dinner, &c., he had that day spent above a sovereign! Fair reader, start not! this little scene is but one of many more which we must give; and is drawn from the life.

CHAPTER XV.

THE EDITOR CALLS UPON GODFREY—THEY SET OUT IN QUEST OF APARTMENTS—A REAL MONEY-MAKING LODGING-HOUSE DESCRIBED—WITH A FURTHER CONVERSATION ON AUTHORSHIP.

Late as it was, Godfrey Malvern sat up and finished his review of the new play before he retired to rest; for he was naturally industrious, and rarely put off until the morrow what ought to be done during the day. The scene was also fresh in his memory, the very attitudes and dresses, and he had noted down some of the most absurd passages in the piece; and altogether made up as fine a 'cutting and slashing' critique, as had been written for many a day.

On the following forenoon the editor called upon our hero, and on reading the theatrical notice, expressed his delight by many a loud outbreak of laughter. Indeed there was one description of a combat, called in the play-bill 'The Dreadful Battle of the Banner,' which Godfrey had hit off so humorously, that it was worthy of insertion in any periodical of the day. The whole review was written in a new style, the manner in which the subject was treated was altogether original, and the editor knew that in Godfrey he had added great strength to his little force.

They dined together, and after dinner the editor spoke to Godfrey of the great expense attendant upon staying at an inn; also pointing out the advantage he would find in some quiet respectable lodging, both in economy and comfort. Godfrey felt grateful for his kindness, and assured him that it was his intention to locate himself in some quiet neighbourhood; and that he had already written to his wife, apprising her, that as soon as he had taken suitable apartments she was to join him in London. At the mention of the name of wife his friend looked somewhat astounded; for he well knew that it was no easy matter

for an unknown author to maintain himself by his pen, letting alone a wife.

"I was thinking," said Godfrey, "that we might for a time make shift with a sitting-room and two bed-rooms; one of which would do for a servant, until I saw how matters turned out, for I have no wish to launch out into any unnecessary expense at the first."

"You will find the rent of three rooms no trifling matter in London," answered the editor. "I have but one, and am compelled to make it answer all purposes; it is my study, dining-room, and bed-room. True enough, I have no wife. You know what a 'turn-up' is,—Goldsmith has described one—

'A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day.'

But we have improved on these things since the doctor's time; and my bed by night furnishes me with a sofa by day. But we will cross one of the bridges; lodgings are more plentiful, and somewhat cheaper, on the Surry-side of the water than they are on this."

They walked arm-in-arm through the city, passed Temple-bar, and crossed Waterloo-bridge; that 'bridge of sighs' to many a shareholder. Their walk was a very pleasant one, for the editor was rich in anecdote, knew many of the faces they met; and our hero was astonished when he saw that some of the first men of the day plodded their way through the streets on foot, and mingled unnoticed in the passing crowd. And this, thought Godfrey, is London! for they had met more than one individual, who would not have passed through the borough of Buttervote without a crowd following at their heels; but here they walked with their cloaks wrapped around them, and not a head was turned to mark their passing by. And Godfrey shrank within himself; he thought of the extended hands which were ever ready to welcome him in the borough; but no one knew him there! A poet, a prince, or a pauper, might just be elbowed in the self-same crowd, and not an eye turn round in astonishment. He saw how very great a man might be considered in some very little town, and yet be known to nobody in London;—that the mayor of Buttervote might walk from Chelsea to Whitechapel, and not a living soul know how great a man he was in his own little borough.

And such is London! in whose streets we have seen the Duke of Wellington, when walking, gather up the folds of his short cloak, that he might keep clear of some 'innocent blackness,' and not run down a poor sweep;—have seen Godwin, the author of 'Caleb Williams, waiting in a low entry among apple-women and 'looped and windowed

raggedness,' until the shower abated. Your truly great men carry not their own grandeur; the world is their servant, and they toss their *great*-coats to it. They carry not an unnecessary garment; when they need it, it is there—a thousand hands are ready to put it on.

They had by this time reached Stamford-street; and as there was rather a 'taking' look about some of the houses, Godfrey expressed his inclination to locate there; but the editor had some idea of what a first-floor respectably furnished amounted to per week, so they struck more to the right, and into Lambeth.

There is a way of doing things in London very different to what you see elsewhere, especially in the lodging-letting department. In a country town you see a dirty piece of paper stuck in the window, with four red wafers, which tells you bluntly and boldly that there are either 'lodgings to let,' or 'good beds for travellers.' Not so in a decent lodging-letting, good-looking, London street. There you are informed in gold letters, on a shining black or blue ground, surrounded with a neat-looking frame, that there are 'genteel apartments to let for a gentleman.' Or, perchance, you see written, in a very neat hand, on a richly-embossed card, deeply fringed with riband, and looking quite like an ornament to the window, 'apartments to let respectably furnished;' or still neater and more astounding, 'a back bed-room for a gentleman, with the use of the parlour:' which means that if a friend calls he can be shown into the parlour, until you can show him into the back bed-room; for the 'use of the parlour' is at the service of every lodger in the house for a few minutes, and you take your 'turn' as they do in a barber's shop. And should your friend stay too long, a voice is soon heard in the passage, exclaiming, "Gentlemen who keep company, should pay for a sitting-room, and not let people wait about in this manner."

They surveyed several apartments, and those who had really anything respectable to let, asked two guineas per week for a first floor, which included attendance; and which attendance signified, that the poor little dirty Cinderella who opened the door, and did every thing, was to wait upon the first-floor lodgers (as well as the other half-dozen who already domiciled under the roof) when she had time. And, oh! the variety of beds, the real beds, the apologies for beds, and the concealed beds. Godfrey saw, in the course of the day, the bold four-poster, the cheap-looking tent, French-bedsteads without end, sofas, drawers, wardrobes, and the downright undisguised turn-up, where a servant *might* sleep, after she had worked until she could no longer

keep her eyes open; and he thought that they knew well how to make the most of room in London.

"You find things look rather different here to what they do in the country?" said the editor, as they again continued their search. "There is very little of that true, homely English comfort to be found in such places as these. A real, downright London lodging-letting house is one of the most uncomfortable places in the civilized world. I mean one of those where the landlord lives by his lodgers, and is so good a hand at his business that he contrives to change them every week. Such houses as these are nearly all alike. I never enter one without feeling cold; there is not a single thing in the place that you can call your own. They were used by another the day before you came, and, probably, another takes possession the day after you have gone; and neither the landlord nor landlady cares who or what they were, so long as they are paid. All the chimney-pieces seem to me to be alike; they are ornamented with a number of little white dogs, birds, baskets, and shells, all looking like lumps of ice, and these the poor little dirty, half-fed servant girl has to dust every morning. If you chance to get up a little earlier than usual, you have to sit down and look on while she dusts them. I always feel a strong inclination to throw such useless trumpery out of the window. And the fire-irons look so cold and bright, they make you feel as if you were freezing. They always stand in the same position; it pains you to see them so long in the same place; and were you to remove them only an inch, when you came back you would find them standing in the self-same spot as they did before. As for the fire, you might carry it all away in your hat without burning yourself. Then there is sure to be a mirror over the mantel-piece, the frame covered with gauze. You would feel much more comfortable if the mirror was but cracked; you might then think that somebody or another had been merry in that cheerless room; but there are no signs of any one having played and romped there, no marks of restless children's hands to tell that they have used things as if they were their own, for they rarely let apartments to those who have children; the moody, the thoughtful, and the silent, are their favourites. Even the table-cover is free from grease; there is no drop of ink upon it, although it is nearly worn threadbare. As for the chairs and carpets, you feel half-afraid either to sit down on the one, or tread upon the other. Then your breakfast, they bring it up on a half-worn tray, bread, butter, tea, half cold, and a rasher of bacon that looks as if it had been laid in the sun

to warm. It comes and goes, and what is left, diminishes somehow in the dark kitchen below; for what could the poor hungry servant do, were it not for the lodgers? If a friend comes in on an evening, to take a glass of grog with you, you ring the bell; and after a long interval, the servant appears:—ten to one, if you want hot water, the fire is out. I always prefer cold grog, when I visit any of my friends in these trim abodes of misery. As for a cigar,—where could you shake off the ashes?—not on those cold, bright fire irons; not on that clean, thread-bare carpet: no! there is no home-feeling about such places. Then your bill at the end of the week—you know to a minute when it will be brought in; it is sure to be served up with the cold tea, and the sun-warmed bacon at breakfast; and Heaven help the lodger who cannot pay it! They watch you as if you were a thief; you no sooner go out, than they are up in your rooms, to see whether you have taken anything or not; they count the white dogs, and the birds, and the little baskets, to see that you have not carried any off in your pockets. To be friends with any one under their roof, is against their principles; for, once familiar, they would begin to suspect that you wanted to run into debt: then with what face could they bully you for the money, if you did not pay to the day? They like your quiet, sullen, saucy-looking lodger the best; one who, when he goes out, slams the door in their faces, as if to say, "D—n you, I pay."

"There is nothing very captivating about the picture you have drawn," replied Godfrey; "but I hope all are not so highly-coloured as you represent them. If so, I should say that Inns are heavens, compared to such places; for there, some one or another, at times, makes merry, drinks, shouts, and sings, just to show that he dare make himself at home. And in spite of a few drawbacks of this nature, I should still prefer 'taking mine ease at mine Inn,' to residing in such cold, formal, comfortless abodes as you have described."

"I have pictured one of the worst," said the editor; "one, in which no lodger ever stays more than a week, and is glad to lose a week's rent to get away, without waiting until the necessary notice has transpired. But be not disheartened; there are hundreds, who, if they get a good lodger, will do their best to keep him, and give up their own comforts for his. Shall we try this house?—there is something about its appearance that augurs well, and has withal a reasonable look."

They knocked at the door; and were admitted by the landlady herself,—a stout, red-faced woman, but exceedingly polite. She had a first-floor to let,—a sitting-room and bed-room; the terms, one guinea

per week. They looked at the apartments, and found them very neatly furnished: the sitting-room contained a sofa, eight chairs, (two of them with arms,) two tables, carpet, hearth-rug, fender, fire irons, a mirror, coal-skuttle, and shells on the mantel-piece, with a few prints, framed and glazed, on the walls. The bed-room had a very comfortable look about it: it contained a bed, a chest of drawers, wash-hand stand, and a painted dressing-table, with a looking-glass upon it. Godfrey struck a bargain at once, and paid a week's rent in advance, which saved all trouble about a reference. This guinea a-week included the attendance of Cinderella, who was busied in the kitchen, washing.

Godfrey sighed, as he glanced his eye over the apartments, before going away, and thought how differently his beautiful young wife would now be lodged, to what she had been used to in the hall of Sutton-cum-Bottesford; but he consoled himself with the hope, that it would not be for long. Indeed it was by her advice, that he sought out so ordinary a lodging; for she had had a long conference with the Parson before Godfrey's departure; and the old man knew something of the expenses of London. Poor dear girl! it might be a garret! she said, she cared not so long as she shared it with her husband; for she believed that his talents were such, that he could not reside long in London, without becoming as famous there, as he had been in the borough of Buttervote, and the village of Sutton-cum-Bottesford. Poor Emma! she little dreamed of the trials she was doomed to undergo; she knew not the perilous sea on which her husband had adventured,—a sea, whose shores are ever strown with a thousand wrecks, and whose mariners, if they escape drowning, die broken-hearted on the strand; for not one out of an hundred makes a prosperous voyage. Let any one who doubts the correctness of this far-fetched image, join the Literary Fund Society,—that little Lighthouse on the gloomy sea of Literature, and he will then exclaim, "Alas! this is too true!" He will there see how many a goodly ship, both name and owner known, and many a little unknown bark, have steered for it, when there was no other human help on 'this rough dark sea!'

The editor was very candid with Godfrey; and told him at once, that if he did all he could for the magazine, the payment at most, would not exceed ten pounds per month. "But I am acquainted with several of the publishers," added he; "and have not the least doubt, but that I can find you a purchaser for any other work you may chance to write in the interim, especially if the work is descriptive of Country Life, and well done."

"I regret that I have only a few poems at present to offer," replied Godfrey; "and these, I fear, are a very unmarketable commodity.— Though, if once put into a fair channel, I have no doubt of their meeting with a fair share of readers."

"They may perhaps be disposed of among the Annuals," answered his friend; "especially if accompanied by a few such water-colour drawings as I saw to-day in your possession. But even the Annuals pay but poorly now for their contributions: formerly there was a good deal of honest competition for first-rate articles,—I speak of the days when the names of Scott and Wordsworth might be found amongst the contributors. Now, you rarely see a name of very high note; if you do, it is obtained by favour—the article begged, not bought. I speak not of the wealthy portion of the Annual writers, who, of course, fill the pages gratis; but of your popular authors, whose pens earn their bread. The Annuals have ruined themselves, by trusting more to their illustrations than their literature: they could not afford to pay what they ought to do for both; they began by docking the poet, to pay the painter; then they cut down the price of the engraver, to keep up the name of the artist; and what between bad engravings, and bad contributions, no marvel that their sale fell, and that good authors refused to send their writings to such works. I know one celebrated author, who still lends his name to their pages, and is paid for his articles; but always hands over the sum to the Literary Fund. I have no wish to see the artist unrewarded for his labour; but I think the author ought also to be paid in the same proportion, for what he does. And I should advise all authors who can write well, to reserve their best articles for their own works, until there is some change in this system."

"Still, some of the Annuals have a tolerable circulation," replied Godfrey; "and I have often noticed that a good article is seldom overlooked by them. Formerly they were not beneath the notice of 'Blackwood's Magazine;' but this was some time ago. Still, an unknown author can only hope to make his name known, by contributing to works which have a large circulation."

"This does not always answer, my friend," said the editor; "he may contribute to a periodical that has a large circulation, and still his article pass almost unnoticed. But this is not the case, if he writes a good, original, readable work—all his own; for then a great number of critical publications are almost sure to notice it, and as sure to differ in their opinions about its merits. Nay, there may be almost an equal division of praise and censure; but even this makes the author known; for

the press rarely opens its columns to even censure a worthless work. There must be something in it, to call forth their remarks at all. I speak not of your downright, dull, arrogant pretenders, whom they sometimes 'cut up' for amusement, and whose names are never again heard of, but of authors who have the honesty to write, what they believe to be the truth; and yet, in spite of all their talent, may have taken a wrong view of the subject they write upon. The political principles of a literary man have often a great influence on his works; and yet what one party condemns, another is almost sure to praise. But an author ought not to belong to any party; he may take his likenesses from both sides, and draw true and faithful portraits, if he be a skilful hand; and yet offend neither. The virtues and the vices of mankind are all fair game; and he may point his piece where he pleases, if he but looks to the ground he stands upon when he fires."

It was now dark; and after having taken tea in a decent-looking coffee-house, they separated,—our hero to return to his Inn, and prepare his article for the next number of the Old Monthly Magazine, and the editor to call upon one or two of his authors, and to apologize for the non-payment of their last contributions. That night, Godfrey Malvern went to sleep with a heavy heart; for he now began to see a little further into the difficulties surrounding authorship. But he expected a letter from his lovely wife by the morning post; and thought that he should soon have Emma with him, to sympathise with his trials, and smile at his triumphs! for hope still whispered that he must in the end succeed. But we must change the scene.

CHAPTER XVI.

EMMA SETS OUT FOR LONDON.—WIDOW CLARKSON'S ATTENTION TO THE COMFORTS OF GREGORY GRUFF.—EMMA REACHES THE INN; BUT MISSES GODFREY.—A DULL DIGRESSION ABOUT LOVE.

Poor dear Emma! she received her husband's letter, kissed it fondly a thousand times, and instead of answering it, began instantly to prepare for her journey to London; for she was miserable without Godfrey. She had removed but very few of her things from home, when, after her marriage, she took up her residence at the rectory; and now, not

knowing what might be required in London, she sent the Rector's servant to the hall, to bring away the remainder. But the squire had issued his orders from London, that not an article was to be removed without his consent; and he threatened to discharge every servant he had left on the establishment, if they allowed a single thing of his daughter's to be carried away. He even commanded the steward to put a padlock and seal on her chamber-door. This was a severe and unexpected blow to our Emma, for she possessed several valuable jewels which she had never made mention of to her husband; and these she intended to have disposed of in London, should they ever be driven into difficulties.

But the thought that she should so soon meet her husband, chased away all these regrets; and her little heart beat quickly as she superintended the packing of her things, for she longed for the wings of a bird, that she might fly direct to her husband. Oh! what a night of preparation was that! There was Gregory Gruff busy in cording up her boxes; and the rector's niece packing up bonnets, and giving orders that this was not to be crushed, nor anything laid upon that, for it contained frills, and dresses, and collars, silks, and muslins, and all those pretty 'fal-the-rals,' with which beautiful women array themselves, and half-turn the brains of poor foolish fellows like ourselves. Poor Gruff! he pleaded hard to accompany Emma to London; "only to see her safe there," as he said, "and just shake hands with Godfrey, —then to return on the following day." But widow Clarkson strongly objected to his taking so long a journey. "The motion of the coach," she said, "would injure his complaint; and he had already a very bad cold coming on, and if it should happen to reach its height while he was away,—be taken ill, and have nobody by to nurse him,—nobody who understood the nature of his disorder like herself, what a shocking thing it would be!"

But Gruff was headstrong; and although the widow managed to shed a few tears, yet Gregory got leave of absence to attend Emma as far as Northampton, where the coach-passengers stopped to dine, on condition that he returned by the 'down coach,' and got home the same evening.

Emma slept but little that night; she thought morning would never come; she heard the church-clock strike the hours, and sighed to think how slowly the time passed. Then again she comforted herself with the thoughts of how surprised her husband would be to see her;—and she drew the curtains aside to see if day had yet broken. She got up

and dressed herself, and by the light of her candle, attempted to read some of Godfrey's poems. She knew every line by heart, and yet she read the little volume through, although she sat without a fire, and the morning was bitter cold. She then called up the parson's servant; and a fire was kindled in the parlour; and soon after the clergyman and his niece came down stairs, and the footstep of Gregory Gruff was heard outside the door; for on no account would he have missed accompanying his favourite Emma.

But what pen can describe the scene which took place between Gruff and the widow?—her care in covering him up—her kind advice—her fears that something might happen to him. She shed tears—she did indeed!—she kissed him; for as she said, she couldn't help it—she might never see him again! Poor Gruff! he looked as if he wished the devil had him. She made him put on so many pairs of stockings, that he couldn't get his boots on; he was so wrapped up in waistcoats, and tied up about the throat, that he began to be afraid she meant to kill him with kindness, for he found it difficult to breathe. And when he got outside the door, he said to himself, "If I dont marry her, it will soon be her death; for the poor woman adores me! Not a mouthful of breakfast has she eaten, nor I dare say won't taste of anything until I return. She is an affectionate soul. God bless her! God bless her!"

Lucky it was that Gregory had left nothing behind which he needed; for had he returned, he would have discovered the disconsolate widow making havoc with an enormous rasher of ham, (for she kept such things concealed, although she pretended she never ate animal food,) and two rounds of toast, together with a very large cup of very strong tea; which showed, that like the inimitable Dalgetty, she let neither sorrow nor siege interrupt her 'provend.'

Emma could eat no breakfast; but after much persuasion, she was prevailed upon to swallow half-a-cup of tea; and this she accomplished with great difficulty. She felt nervous, feverish, excited,—she longed to be on her way towards her husband; and as she counted the hours which must elapse before she should see him, a feeling of sadness and depression settled upon her spirits.

At length the coach came rumbling up. 'Two insides' had been booked in the borough; and after some delay in packing the luggage, the door was opened for herself and Gruff to enter. The voice of the kind-hearted clergyman faltered as he kissed her, and bade her 'farewell;' as for his niece, she wept bitterly—and her weeping was very different

to widow Clarkson's. Of course, Emma promised to write often; and the worthy parson bade her remember, that if things did not turn out in London according to their wishes, and her father still kept aloof—come when they might, by night or by day, his home should ever be their home, whilst he had one to shelter his head. Emma pressed the old man's hand in silence; for her heart was too full to speak.

Inside the coach was a young traveller—a fine dashing London youth, who talked about politics, the funds, failures, fashions, theatres, and the number of bottles of wine he and his companions had drunk overnight. He looked very hard at Emma, and would fain have lent her his cloak, as he feared she might feel too cold; but the young lady dropped her veil, and spoke in such a way, as convinced him that his attentions greatly annoyed her. They reached Northampton at early noon, but Emma could not be prevailed upon to take any dinner; a biscuit and a glass of wine, (in which she pledged honest Gregory Gruff,) were all she partook of. "Time's up," said the guard, entering the room before the passengers had half-finished their dinners; but the young traveller, and two or three others who had joined him at the table, were determined not to move until they had fairly dined. A few oaths were interchanged on both sides; but the travellers carried the day—and they were in the right of it.

Before parting with Emma, Gregory put a sealed note into her hand, bidding her deliver it to Godfrey, and with it, his best wishes; and as he still retained her hand, he added, "I may perhaps come up to see you when the weather gets warmer; and if I do, I shall bring my hostess with me for company. It will be a treat to her—and she deserves it."

"I hope you will not bring her up a widow," said Emma, with one of her arch looks. "But I forget, you have forsworn matrimony."

"My horoscope foretells that I shall make a great fool of myself before long," replied Gruff; "and what is to be, will be. And I am sure that if I am doomed to plunge into any very extraordinary folly, there must be a woman at the bottom of it. God bless you, my love; good-bye! I shall see you both before long; for I sorely miss Godfrey. Tell him it's all over with the magazine now he's gone."

This brief dialogue took place at the inn door; and Emma in drawing on her gloves while in the room, had laid the note Gruff gave her on the table, and forgotten to take it up. It caught the eye of the young traveller in a moment, and as he knew to whom it belonged, he took it up, and was about to present it with one of his most 'killing

smiles' to Emma at the door, when the young lady drew herself to her full height, and turned her back towards him as she saw him approach.

"Very well, my proud beauty," muttered the young man to himself, as he entered the coach; "the guard shall give it you, for I will not, unless you are a little more civil."

In a few more minutes the coach rolled down the hilly street of Northampton, and Emma was again on her way to London. Gruff looked after the vehicle until it was lost to his sight. Then heaving a deep sigh, he re-entered the inn, there to await the arrival of the conveyance which was to bear him back to widow Clarkson, and Sutton-cum-Bottesford.

Saving the attentions of the young traveller, who at every other stage where they changed horses brought a glass of brandy-and-water to the coach-door, and endeavoured to persuade Emma to drink, nothing of note transpired until they reached London, which they did about eight in the evening. Emma marvelled at the length of the streets they passed, the brilliancy of the lights, and the splendour of the shops; but all this was soon shut out, and they entered the same inn-yard as we have described in a former chapter.

Gruff had given strict orders to the guard respecting the lady's luggage; and as Gregory had added to his instructions a crown-piece, that worthy functionary saw every thing safely delivered. Emma rushed into the inn with a beating heart, and inquired for her husband.

The answer was, he had but just gone; the coach must have passed the cab which took away his luggage. He had taken private lodgings, but where they knew not. Had inquired if any letter had been left for him; was in the house not five minutes before the coach arrived. Emma heard all, while her countenance turned pale as death! and she would have fallen on the floor had not the traveller, who at that moment chanced to enter, caught her in his arms, and in doing so unconsciously dropped the note he was about to deliver to her, on the floor. The traveller was, on the whole, a kind-hearted young fellow; and no sooner was he given to understand the cause which had so deeply affected the young lady, than he made inquiries as to the colour of the cab, its number, and so on; and, as another gentleman had just alighted, and discharged his fare, he ordered the cabman to 'drive like the devil' in pursuit of a green cab and grey horse, which he ascertained had turned down Cheapside, with orders to cross one of

the bridges; but which bridge he could not ascertain, although the informant was right respecting the colour of the vehicle and the horse, which had, but a few minutes before, carried away Godfrey Malvern and his luggage to his new lodgings.

Godfrey's heart beat high as the cab drew back into Wood-street, to allow room for the coach to turn into Lad-lane; for he well knew that, but a few hours before, those very wheels had rolled through the village of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, past the very door where he thought his beautiful young wife dwelt, and that even her own eyes might have beheld it pass, as she breathed a prayer for his welfare. Poor Godfrey! had he but known that the beloved object he had heaved so many sighs for was at that moment so near him, he would have risked the breaking of his neck in jumping out of the cab to have embraced her. But he made sure there would be a letter by the next morning's post, and so resolved upon calling at the inn at an early hour.

Poor Emma! she passed a miserable night, although she slept on the same bed which her husband had occupied the evening before her arrival. Even the chamber-maid was deeply affected, when she saw the lady enter the room, and gather up some scraps of paper, which Godfrey had left on the table; she pressed them eagerly to her lips, for well did she know the hand-writing. Towards morning she sobbed herself asleep; for the servant had entered her chamber two or three times in the earlier part of the evening to see if she wanted any thing, and to tell her that all attempts to find out her husband's residence had been unsuccessful. The kind-hearted girl bade her not take it so much to heart; for, added she, "he is sure to call in the morning to see if there is any letter, and then I will show him into your room."

The young traveller had indeed done his best to discover the residence of Godfrey, and many a door had he knocked at, as he followed the different directions given to him. Some answered him civilly, others swore at him; and when he again reached the inn, and had had his 'labour for his pains', and also discovered that he had lost the note, and that no one had found it, he sat down to his brandy and cigar, and swore that he would never again play the 'amiable' to any strange lady the longest day he had to live.

Godfrey also passed a restless night, for he had in his letter begged of Emma to drop him a few lines by return of post; had told her how miserable he should feel until he had heard from her. Dear Emma!—she knew that he could not feel more wretched than she

had done; so, instead of writing an answer, had resolved to appear herself, to say what she wanted, with her own sweet lips. Remember, reader, they were but newly married! She had calculated the time, and knew that she should be in London within ten hours at the farthest from when he would have received her letter. And that night she regretted bitterly that she had not obeyed her husband's commands,—that she had not listened to the advice of her friend the clergyman, who entreated her to write, though it were only a few words, that Godfrey might be ready to receive her.

No, Emma knew best; it would be such a surprise to him!—she had even laid it out to the parson's niece, how she should call for a private room; then send word that some gentleman wished to speak with him; hide herself behind the door as he entered, and spring upon him without warning; and, in the momentary gaiety of her heart, had thrown her arms around her companion's neck, just as she intended to do round Godfrey's. And the niece thought it was excellent; and they laughed together to think how astonished Godfrey would be.

Poor girl! had she been left to herself she would have rushed out like the Saracen lady of old, who, falling in love with the father of the celebrated Thomas à Becket, when he was a slave, procured his freedom, and afterwards followed him to London; where, without knowing his residence, and being unable to utter more than two words of English, she wandered through the streets, calling out, "London! Becket!—London! Becket!" until she found him.

But morning came at last; and, long before post-time, Godfrey Malvern entered the inn. True to her promise, the chamber-maid conducted him into Emma's room, opened the door, and left them together.

Oh! Love. thou art a funny little fellow! But why the devil they gave thee a bow and arrows, and a pair of wings, has often puzzled my poor brains. Was there no decent tailor living in the neighbourhood in which thou wert born? I can tell thee, my Love, that wert thou to appear amongst us, in the present day, as thou didst among the old Greeks, thou wouldst be committed to 'durance vile;' and even thy goddess-mother would stand but a poor chance of bailing thee out, unless she could first borrow something to make herself look decent in. It would make my heart ache, my juvenile antique, to see thee condemned to prison—to see thee picking up thy wretched diet with the point of thine arrow; or led by the hand by some sturdy policeman through the street, weeping and carrying thy little bow; or, perchance,

they might hang thee—might fulfil the prophecy of Sir Philip Sydney, who, nearly three hundred years ago, sung,

> "Ring out the bells, and let the mass be said,
> For Love is dead."

Thy father-in-law, Vulcan, had the reputation of being a hard-working old blacksmith; and surely he might have spared a few shillings, had it but been to have purchased thee a suit of corduroy, and not have let thee run about the streets like a little vagabond. But thou ever wert a spoilt child—they never sent thee to a decent school to learn good manners; and it is too late to reclaim thee now.

And time has softened the sharp twanging of thy bow. Thou hast become more cautious of late, looking before thou shootest; for it is useless now to fire at random. Many are up to thy tricks, and carry their pocket-books to guard their hearts. Thou must throw them bank-notes, my Love, ere they will unloose their leathern armour. Do this, and they will stand shooting at like targets. Even women have steeled their stays against thee—thou canst but hit them with golden arrows.

Jolly days were those, my Love, which thou didst spend in Arcadia, in the olden time, when men 'popped the question,' while sitting cozily under some wide-spreading tree, and, if accepted, had only to drive their flocks together; or, perchance, without rising, just whistle to their dogs, and the deed was done. But times are sadly altered, my Love; we require more things now than a tree for a roof, a sheepskin for a couch, and a tar-box to keep off the flies! nor could we have lived in thy palmiest days without our gridiron and umbrella. Smoking, too, is dry work, my Love! and had we sat all day with our pipes in our mouths, we should have preferred porter to the purling streams, and a 'go' of brandy to the best brooks of Arcadia.

Thou hast much to answer for, my Love! many charges could be brought against thee, which would not at all redound to thy credit. As to thy being blind, it would not do—the cheat would be discovered in any court. As thou lovest thyself, never go to law! If caught in a net, like thy mother, 'tis better to stand the laugh as she did, than lose the trial, and have to pay the costs. 'Good-bye, my Love! good-bye!'

CHAPTER XVII.

GODFREY MALVERN AND HIS WIFE ARE INSTALLED IN THEIR NEW LODGINGS;—A LONDON CINDERELLA DESCRIBED;—AND A SLIGHT SKETCH OF DOWNRIGHT AUTHORSHIP.

Before night, Godfrey Malvern and his beautiful young wife were installed in their new lodgings, too happy in each other's company, to bestow a thought, or heave a sigh at the change; for Emma preferred sharing the two little ready-furnished rooms with her husband, to remaining alone, and reigning sole mistress of the proud apartments in the hall of Sutton-cum-Bottesford. They sat side-by-side by the fire, and Godfrey held her beautiful white hand within his own, and looked into her face—and felt how much he loved her—felt the sacrifice she had made for his sake. In the centre of the room stood her boxes and trunks—the lids opened, many of her costly articles of dress lying on the chairs, others upon the floor; for she had so many things to say to her husband, that she had not yet found time to put them away. Many of the articles strown about, seemed to lie as if in mockery at the feet of the fair owner. There were sheets of music—the harp and the piano were miles away, standing silent and unsounded, in the forsaken hall; the thick gloves which she wore when amusing herself in the garden—there was no need of them now; the dull spot of ground behind the house, used for drying clothes,—even in summer, only nourished the unsightly elder-bushes beside the ditch, and the sickly lilac-tree, which never flowered; as for the wooden shed miscalled the summer-house, it sheltered only large families of ear-wigs, it was shunned by the sun, and the fresh-air had no entrance there.—Her beautiful riding-habit now hung useless over the chair-back; her favourite pony pined away in the stable—it had long missed her sweet voice, and refused its food from any other hand.

But Emma thought not of these things; she was happier amid the 'genteel meanness' of those beggarly rooms, than her father, who sat alone, sipping his wine, in the splendid apartments which he at that moment occupied in one of the west-end fashionable squares. Affection sweetens the bitterest cup; and the poor beggar on his straw, if he is but loved, sleeps sounder than the feared and hated baron, in his grand

and solitary chamber. Midnight dropped down upon the huge city of London before they retired to rest, and Godfrey had unfolded to her all his plans. Hope seemed to smile sweetly upon their slumbers.

"Oh Hope! delusive Hope! 'tis Time
Alone that proves thee a deceiver;
Thou bringest buds of promised prime,
But the keen frost attends thee ever!"

Emma was awakened next morning by the 'cries of London,'—that jingle of bells and succession of voices, which sound so strangely to unaccustomed ears; for very few can at first tell what these itinerant venders have to sell. 'Milk-o!' came first; then 'water-cresses!' were followed by 'fine new shrimps!' after this, 'hot rolls!' then the beer boy calling 'pots!' who was succeeded by 'cat's meat!' and this closed in with the rumbling of wheels, and the cry of 'dust-o!'—Then came the thrilling double-knock of the postman, and the deep-voiced Jew crying 'old clo!' as he cast his sharp eyes into the cellars; 'hare skins!' and 'chairs to mend!' joined in with 'knives and scissors to grind!' and this strange concert was aided by an Italian boy, with his organ.

Emma looked out of the window, and found much to amuse her in this moving panorama,—it was so different to anything she had before seen; and yet she missed that rich gush of fragrance which came streaming in at her own chamber window on a morning across the park; she missed the rich landscape which spread around the hall of Sutton-cum-Bottesford. But her husband was with her now,—and without him the country had no charms for our Emma.

Breakfast was brought up by the Cinderella of the establishment,—a little dirty trollops such as can be found nowhere in the world, saving in a regular London lodging-house. Poor girl! the kind manner in which Emma spoke to her, was so unlike the general treatment she received, that she scarcely knew what she was about; and when she left the room, she staid on the landing to wipe away the tear from her begrimed cheek.

Oh! how different was her reception in the parlour, where sat the big, vulgar, gin-drinking mistress of the house. "What a while you've been up-stairs," exclaimed the landlady; "I could have waited on twenty people in the time. Remember there are more folks than one to be attended to. Put some more water in the tea-pot, and answer the bell up-stairs. Mr. Potts has rung for his shaving-water this half-hour. But first bring a little more coal up, and fetch some sugar

in—I have not enough for breakfast; and tell Mr. Dent it must be better than the last, or I shall seek another shop. Don't you hear Mr. Malvern's bell?—why do you stand there like a stupid?"

Poor Cinderella! no marvel that among so many various orders, she knew not which to execute first. But it was of little consequence, for she was sure to do wrong; she was always doing from morning until night; she worked, and the landlady growled—and so they passed the day.

It would have frightened any servant but a real London Cinderella, to have gone down into the kitchen in a morning, and have seen the work those little hands had to do. The rows of boots and shoes she had to clean—the candlesticks to rub bright—the dishes to wash up—the pots and pans to scour—the rugs to shake—the washing she had about of her own, all the week, and which never was done, although she was always a-doing. Then the number of times she went in and out in a day—she seemed to flit to and fro like a swallow while building its nest; she was here and there in a moment—in and out like a dog in a fair. Now off for tea—then butter—next time, a chop—then a bottle of soda-water for the gentleman who had drank too much over-night.—Again, for the newspaper—a letter to the post-office—a pair of shoes to mend—a bundle to be carried to the laundress—a quartern of gin for the landlady. And she was ever taking down her little bonnet, which she never tied, and throwing on the half-shawl, she never pinned—then with the latch-key in her hand, pointing her head twenty different ways—going—returning—then diving into the kitchen for a few moments, to do her work—then up again to answer the bell; and never executing a single command of the lodgers, without being called into the parlour, to tell the landlady what it was; and sometimes such dialogues as the following, took place between the she-Corsair and Cinderella,—"What's that?"—"A chop for the gentleman."—"What did you pay for it?"—"Fourpence-halfpenny: I've got sevenpence-halfpenny out of the shilling he gave me."—"Then put the three-halfpence on the mantel-piece, and say it cost sixpence. And reach me a knife to take a slice off that half-pound of butter, before it goes up. And tell the gentleman he wants some bread getting. We ate the last of his loaf, last night—but don't tell him that! And say his tea is nearly out. Then bring me up his ham, I think I could eat a mouthful for my lunch. And never take anything up-stairs again without letting me first see it. If people will put us to so much trouble, we must be paid either by 'hook or by crook.' And tell Mr. Potts we

kept his fire burning last night, until just before he came home; and that the old clothes dealer would only allow five shillings for the things he left out to be sold; and here, take it up-stairs, and never call that man in again—they were well worth a pound, though he would give no more than fifteen shillings; but the Jews have no consciences! If he gives you anything out of the five shillings, give it me towards a new gown which I mean to buy you some day or another, if you are a good girl." "Yes, ma'am," was the reply; and she again hurried up-stairs to answer the bells, first looking in upon our hero and his beautiful wife, for the sweet smile and soft voice of Emma, had won her heart.

Days and weeks passed away, and they still occupied the same rooms. Godfrey worked hard, and all he wrote was accepted; but neither fame nor wealth came near him: his name was as little known to the reading public of London, as that of his old rival, George Monk, of Buttervote celebrity; for the critical ushers of the monthly periodicals at that time very seldom noticed the Old Monthly Magazine. But this very neglect was not without its good effects upon Godfrey: it fired his proud spirit, and he resolved within himself that he would ere long do something which that little world 'the reading public,' should notice.

Genius is, after all, a queer commodity to bring into the market. Cotton or coffee, tea or turnips, are things which most people understand at once; but a poem, or a little prose-sketch, are not articles of daily consumption. Authorship is the last trade that will affect the funds; we find it not in the money market; it is not even whispered on change; the manuscripts read there belong not to the poetical; a drama of Shakspeare's, would stand at a discount. Wealth and fame have but little fellowship with one another. Wealth wings himself only for the day; he waves his condor-like plumes, and startles the country for a few brief moments; then sinks into—carrion. The wings of Fame are more endurable: though they flap but weakly, at first; yet in that very flapping there is fire, and when consumed there lie the ashes of a phœnix—another head bears up above the blaze. Immortality claims the ashes for her own. The wings of Fame are silvered with moonlight, and tipped with the rays of the sun; and while there is light in the world, those plumes will catch its last ray. It is the last gold eternity will gild, the last earthly thing the closing gates of heaven will darken upon.

But we must turn to Godfrey Malvern, and take a hasty glance at hard-plodding downright authorship,—that wear and tear of mind,

which so many sigh to put into practice, but who have never yet known what it is to write against time—to pile page upon page, until the given gap is filled up, and which, when done, barely 'keeps the wolf from the door.'

And Emma sat beside her husband for hours, in silence; while his thoughts were alone absorbed in the subject he was writing about; and sometimes, when his arm ached, and he laid down his pen out of sheer weariness, she would put out her hand, and return the silent pressure of his own, as if to remind him that she was still there. Another hour, and nothing was heard, saving the low sharp scratching of the pen, or the rustling of the paper, as one page succeeded another, all looking to the eye alike, and rarely varying in quantity a single line, so much had practice done for his once irregular hand. Now and then the printer's boy would come for more 'copy,' or wait until Godfrey glanced his eye over the 'revise;' or bring a bundle of rough proofs for correction. And it was marvellous to see how soon Emma made herself useful—how readily she could detect a turned s, or n, or discover a mis-spelt word; until, at last, her husband had such confidence in her as a reader, that when he had once satisfied himself that the text was such as he intended it to be, he left the correcting of the 'literal errors' to his lovely wife.

And this was the life they led for weeks. Every month he contributed his sheet of prose to the magazine, filled up the half pages with short pieces of poetry, besides writing a larger poem, and reviewing a great number of the new works which were sent in. Nor was this all; for when he could snatch a few hours from his 'task-work' on the periodical, he laboured on at his more ambitious enterprise, which was to write a complete work, affix his name to it, and trust to its success for a more permanent reputation, than he could ever hope to gain by contributing, almost anonymously, to the 'Old Monthly Magazine.'

Godfrey soon discovered, that even to become popular as a contributor to the periodicals, a man requires some name,—that an article by the author of one or two works, always attracted more attention than one written by an unknown contributor. Not that such articles were always spoken well of; but still the name of the author was mentioned, as a guarantee that there was something in the work worth looking at. Now and then an anonymous paper was pointed out by the press, as something out of the common way; but, ten to one, the next contribution by the same hand was almost unnoticed, which might not have been the case had the author's name been known.

These reflections roused our hero to exert himself more than ever, for such sums as he obtained from the editor of the magazine barely sufficed to pay their necessary expenses, although their style of living was very economical; for Emma was an excellent manager. And now Godfrey would steal an hour or two upon the midnight, if he could by any stratagem manage to get rid of Emma. Sometimes he would beg half an hour, and persuade her to retire to rest first; and although, for a time, she could not sleep without him, but would lie awake, counting the moments until he came, or return again, and prevail upon him to write no more until the morrow; yet, by degrees, she became reconciled to his habits, and left him to labour on, until he resigned the task of his own accord.

And Godfrey seldom took up his greater work until late in the night. There was something in the silence and solitude of those very hours, that awakened a different train of thought to what came upon him at any other time. His memory seemed stronger, objects rose more clearly before him, and he was able to recall such images of the past as refused to obey his bidding in the day-time. What he wrote at these hours was far superior to what he did at any other time. There was more feeling and reality about it; an easier flowing of thought, a greater freedom of style. The words seemed to settle down into such a form as he wished them—there was more heart in the subject. He could call up the very faces he wanted to see, could hear the very sounds which haunted his fancy, could catch more motion, attitude, colour; recal the features of a landcape more distinctly before him, the curving of a river, the light that fell upon it, the shadow of the boat which glided along, even to the dusky breaks of the overhanging trees, as they fell far out upon the sunshine.—And he knew, after such reveries as these, that what he had written would be read: he had not a symptom of fear, for he knew that he had the power of making others feel what he himself felt so vividly.

Confidence, after all, has a great deal to do with success. It is the very mainspring of the machine. It makes a man tread the earth with the firmness of a lion. It is strength and courage. But it must be the confidence of action, not the half-dreamy uncertainty of hope, that sits listlessly beside the hearth with arms folded and eyes closed, and, like the old woman, with the empty pot on the fire, feels certain that there will be something in it at dinner-time;—not the excuse of the idle man, who leaves all to Providence, and does nothing himself. Elijah trusted not all to the ravens; but, while he could, 'ate and

drank,' well knowing that his journey was great. It was only whilst executing his great mission that his wants were attended to—he loitered not by the way. There is not in the whole Bible a passage which more strongly points out the necessity of industry than the one above, although too many quote it as an excuse for their idleness; and from it attempt to prove, that man ought to—

"Just do nothing all the day,
And soundly sleep the night away."

But Godfrey Malvern thought differently. He discovered, that the only way by which a man can surmount the difficulties of this world, is by industry, whether he follows literature, or any other ordinary business—that a book can no more make itself than a basket! As for the more easy, though less reputable path to fame—the 'paste and scissor' reputation—he had no inclination to follow it. So he worked on in his own way, and very often until two or three in the morning; and by this means he soon added chapter to chapter, until he could lay his hand on a goodly pile of manuscript.

But we must leave him to his labour—his little stock of money decreasing day by day—his brow becoming pale—and the fine country bloom waning on Emma's cheek; for she seldom left the close, stifling atmosphere of that unhealthy room, unless it was to take a short walk with her husband round the almost grassless waste of Kennington Common, or along some of the dusty roads in the neighbourhood of Lambeth. Our scene now changes to Sutton-cum-Bottesford—to pure air, and sweet sunshine—the bowers where those old turtles, Gregory Gruff and Widow Clarkson

"Winged them to some withered bough!"

For who would not

"Lament if they were lost?" *Winter's Tale.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW GREGORY GRUFF CAUGHT COLD, AND WAS ATTENDED BY WIDOW CLARKSON—AND HOW THE WIDOW PRESCRIBED A PITCH-PLASTER, WHICH GRUFF FOUND A 'STICKER'—ENDING WITH 'A MORAL.'

THERE was no inside place vacant in the coach, which bore back Gregory Gruff to the village of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, on the day

when he parted with Emma at Northampton; and as a post-chaise is not now to be had so readily as it was before railroads were so common, Gruff took an outside seat. It was a chilly winter's evening, and a bleak north wind blew full in the teeth of the passengers, as if it would search them through; the consequence was, Gruff caught a severe cold.

Although widow Clarkson seemed very sorry when she found, next morning, that Gregory was unable to rise from his bed, she was really at heart very glad, for she had now an opportunity of 'nursing and coddling him up,' as she expressed it; and resolved within herself not to let him get well too soon. Bed, gruel, and hot-water, were what she determined to begin the siege with—keeping in the rear, a little arrow root; and by such means she doubted not but that she should soon reduce the garrison of Gruff, to sign a treaty of marriage. She knew that he would as soon see the Devil at his bedside, as a doctor; so having no fear of a rival in the field, set about the work cheerfully.

She began by persuading him that he was in a very dangerous state; and Gruff, like a brave old general who finds his ammunition nearly spent, and his provisions running short, confessed with a growl and an oath, that such was the case. She then preached patience and resignation, telling him that sleep and quietude would be of more avail than any medicine; and that anger and restlessness would but increase his complaint. Gruff got rid of a good round volley of oaths, in which he consigned all north winds and outside seats to that place where it is said there is no skating; then, as if he had emptied all his present pent-up wrath, agreed to keep himself calm. The next terms the widow proposed were, that he should be guided by her alone—take all that she administered, without murmuring—and whatever his own inclinations might be, never give way to them for a moment, until he was well. Agreed to on the part of Gruff, on condition that he was to be restored in three or four days at the furthest.

Poor Gruff! had he been left to himself, he would have been well in a day or two; while the healthiest man that ever set foot upon the earth, had he adhered rigidly to the widow's prescriptions, would have been confined to his bed at the end of a week. If Gruff was dozing, just dropping into a refreshing sleep, feeling himself warm and comfortable, and in a gentle perspiration, which above all things throws off a cold, his kind nurse was sure to arouse him—she had brought a pan-full of hot water, and he must keep his feet in it for half-an-hour.

Poor Gruff obeyed; and sat sneezing and swearing with the blanket around him, until he caught as many additional colds, as would, if fairly divided, have made the fortunes of half the doctors in a city. He had a cough strong enough to stop a horse at full gallop. Growling, he would bundle into bed again; and when half asleep, the widow was sure to enter—either his pillow required shaking, or the coverlet was nearly off; and the only comfort Gruff had, was, to swear to himself. And the gruel! from his very soul he cursed the gruel; it was always time to take it when it was least needed. If it made him sick, the widow said it was a good sign: if hungry, it was also a good sign; and next time, she brought his arrow-root. If weak, gruel would strengthen him—if cold, it would warm him—if hot, make him cool—and when he could take nothing else, he took hot water with his feet: she would have persuaded him to have stood with his head in it, had she but had a precedent to have quoted, but she had not; so contented herself every half-hour, with gruel, hot water, and arrow-root. If Gregory complained of heat, she wanted him to perspire, and tucked in the bed-clothes more tightly around him—if of cold, she threw on an extra blanket, for he must be kept warm: if he loathed his gruel, and was thirsty, there was a refreshing and strengthening jug of toast-and-water at hand, or he might revel in the ruddy gravy of an orange, or quaff whole rivers of lemonade.

No marvel, then, that by such means, she reduced him low enough at last; and seemed to be in a fair way of killing him with kindness. She went so far as to ask Gregory if she might not read a Tract to him, entitled, 'Dying thoughts of a Debauchee;' but Gruff's answer savoured little of divinity; for he consigned her and the Debauchee to the Devil in a breath—and then fell asleep.

The widow seated herself by the bedside, and listening for some time attentively, was soon convinced by the deep, regular breathing, that Gruff was sound asleep. She then drew close the bed-curtains so silently and cautiously, that the little noise made, would scarcely have startled a mouse. This done, she once more seated herself—her eyes fixed on Gruff's green-coat, in the side-pocket of which she well knew he carried his banking-book. She looked at the coat—then towards the bed; and was about to satisfy her curiosity, when Gruff moved.—"I must give him a little laudanum," thought the widow, "or I shall never know how much he is worth." Gruff slept soundly enough; and she at last screwed up her courage, and drew forth the book. The deep snoring of the sleeper convinced her that all was right, so she

ventured to peep at the inside. From the various memoranda she soon discovered that Gregory had twenty thousand pounds in the three-per-cents, and that by the accumulation of different dividends, no less than five thousand pounds were then in the banker's hands at Buttervote.

"Twenty-five thousand pounds!" exclaimed the widow, unable to restrain her joy, and forgetting at the moment where she was, "enough to keep a carriage and go to ——"

"The Devil!" exclaimed Gruff, sitting bolt upright in bed; "I say they must be taught to think; it is the mind that wants cultivating—d—n the manners; a bear may be taught to make a bow."

Glad that matters were no worse, the widow concealed the book; and withdrawing the curtains, said, "Even in thy sleep thou art dreaming of the good of others. But thou must not let the school occupy thy mind so much—but keep thyself quiet. I should have thought in your present dangerous state, you had other worldly matters more serious to think about." This was the first gentle hint the widow had given about his Will; for she now thought that if he should die, she should like to know what he intended doing with his wealth. In a word, whether it would be better for her to kill or cure him.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Gruff, turning his head sharply round, while the widow doubled a thick blanket, and threw it over his shoulders.

"I don't wish to alarm you, my dear Mr. Gruff," proceeded the cautious widow; for she well knew the irritable temper of her patient. "But you seem as if you had something on your mind—you talk in your sleep, and sometimes allude to—to money," (it was false, but the widow got it out) "and I only wished to say—not that I think there's any danger—but life you know is uncertain—and your cough's very bad, and you are not so young as you was, and if this cold should settle upon your lungs, I don't know what might happen; and you don't seem to take to your gruel and arrow-root as I should wish you. And I was thinking that perhaps you might wish to consult——"

"I understand you!" said Gruff, a sarcastic smile gathering on his lips as he spoke. "It's very kind of you—but all that's settled long since." The widow looked blank at this announcement. "I've made my will, and left all my property to build a new school—to found a new system of education, with so much a-year for a Professor of Passions. Every child is to be taught just what he likes to learn, and no more. If he is fond of running in the rain, and getting wet, he is to be

taught navigation;—if of climbing trees, and ascending ladders, and getting on the roofs of houses, he must be taught astronomy;—if fond of digging in the dirt, and picking up bones, stones, &c., he must be educated for a geologist;—if of gathering flowers, and pulling down hedges, he must be instructed in botany;—if shrewd, cunning, and not too much given to utter the truth, except in a round-about way, he must be brought up to the bar;—if dull, heavy-headed, and given to sleep, he must be trained up for the church;—if fond of running away, and trespassing on forbidden grounds, he must study geography, for his inclination will lead him to discover new countries."

Gregory had mounted his favourite hobby, and talked away until he got into a perspiration, which did him more good than all the gruel he had hitherto swallowed; and, after having had a good long sleep, he awoke much better, complaining only of a pain in his back.

The widow had hit upon a new thought, while she listened attentively to Gregory; and now she proposed, as a cure, a good strong pitch-plaster, which, she said, would both draw out the cold, and strengthen him; adding, that she remembered her mother had often applied a similar remedy when her father had taken cold, and that she never knew it to fail.

"Then let me have one," said Gruff, "anything to take away this cursed pain."

"But," said the widow, and she paused; "you know, Mr. Gruff, I must send for somebody to put it on. Not that I think there's anything indelicate, or improper, in any lady attending upon a gentleman when he's ill. But this is a very censorious world, Mr. Gruff; and when you swore at the nurse I hired, and would not allow her to come near you, when you were ill before, she went and talked about it, and said that it was not prudent for any woman, but a regular nurse, to wait upon a single gentleman. And you know, Mr. Gruff, that Clarkson did not leave me very well off; and I am sure you have too much respect for me to wish my character should be injured. And if I have attended upon you, early and late, and been with you more than I ought, it was through a fear that nobody else might feel that—that ——" and she hid her face in her handkerchief, peeping, however, out of one corner, and thinking about the twenty-five thousand pounds; while her bosom gave two or three shakes, and she would have given a guinea at that moment if she could but have cried.

"D—n the woman!" muttered Gruff to himself; "I shall be forced to tell her that I mean marrying her, or I shall never get rid of

this pain in my back." Then his better nature prevailing, while he thought over her many acts of kindness, which he believed had sprung wholly from disinterested motives, he said, "Well, well, if I recover, it will not matter what the world says—the devil take it. And rather than your character should suffer through your kindness towards me, if you wish it, why I'll marry you; and now get the pitch-plaster ready as quickly as you can. There, I've said it. Come, be off."

But the widow had not yet done. Such a declaration ought, of course, to draw forth a responding feeling; so she drew closer to the bed, and, bending down, threw her arms around Gruff, and exclaimed, "Oh, my heart!"

"The devil! do you mean stifling me?" exclaimed Gregory, edging away as well as he could; for he was half smothered.

"Not for worlds," replied the widow, putting on one of her sweetest smiles; "but, oh! my feelings, they are too much for me! To think that I shall at last be happy, with the only man I ever did dearly —— oh!"

And she went away, with the white handkerchief before her eyes, to prepare the pitch-plaster, and think over what she should do with the twenty-five thousand pounds when she was married.

Gruff turned round in bed, and said to himself, "She's an affectionate creature, and doats upon me; and were I not to marry her, poor thing! it might be her death. And this pain in my back,—what else could I have done? But it's devilish hard, that I should be forced to pledge myself to marriage for the sake of obtaining a pitch-plaster. But it's all fate! fate!—I was born to it; and if I don't like her, I can but leave her. My horoscope says something about running away;—and it can but come to that at the worst."

The ice once broken, widow Clarkson now determined to proceed more delicately; for she had not forgotten how often Gruff had praised modesty as the most commendable virtue in woman. And to show that she possessed this virtue to perfection, she came to the resolution of putting on the pitch-plaster in the dark! not doubting but that such a display of delicacy would raise her highly in the estimation of her intended husband. There was, however, a fire in the chamber; but she thought it would be carrying her virtuous scruples too far to rake it out.

The plaster was soon prepared, and spread out burning hot upon a wash-leather, when the widow entered the chamber, and, put-

ting out the candle, said, "Are you ready?"—then, guided by the light of the fire, approached the bed.

Gruff had again sunk into a doze, and, forgetting all about the plaster, turned round with his face towards the widow, and said, "Yes, my dear!" thinking she had, as usual, brought his gruel, when slap came the burning remedy upon his face and bald head!—Eyes, nose, and mouth, were covered in an instant; splitting in the middle a long three-syllable oath, as Gregory jumped out of bed, tearing off the plaster and the skin at the same moment, and consigning the widow and her cure to ten thousand waggon loads of devils! With many apologies, pardons, and expressions of sorrow, the widow proceeded to get a light, and Gruff again to bundle into bed, his face smarting, and his eyes half-seamed up with pitch; and just as he was pulling the bed-clothes once more about him, down he came upon the hot pitch-plaster! This time, however, it had missed his face, and Gregory again sprang out of bed with the infernal plaster adhering to him, in such a manner as quite upset the modesty of the widow, and compelled her to run down stairs, leaving Gruff to get it off in the best way he could.

Damning the bed, the plaster, and the widow, in a breath, Gruff began to dress himself. The pain in his back had gone; and after the nurse had cleared away the pitch from his face, he felt so much better, through his unexpected exertion, that he ate a round of toast, two eggs, and drank a large cup of tea; and, forgetting his late disaster, began to chat with the widow as usual, until he again felt drowsy.

Widow Clarkson retired while Gruff undressed; but here a new and unexpected obstacle presented itself. Gregory had got on his inexpressibles without any help, but to get them off again was another matter. 'Pitch not only defileth!' as the old proverb says, but it also sticketh; and this Gruff found to his sorrow. He pulled, grinned, and swore; for it was an affair too delicate to call for the help of the widow—but all was of no use. He then had recourse to his penknife; and cutting away the forepart of his 'unmentionables'—which every body knows means his breeches—he jumped into bed, much like a knight with his shield reversed, and carrying it with him as if he still occupied his saddle. When in bed he soon got warm; and when warm —— But no matter, it was daylight before he fell asleep, and got rid of the last remnants. Even when he jumped out of bed next morning, he looked like an original comet, with a white sheet for a tail.

And all this happened through the widow having too much modesty. Fair reader! thou already seest the moral of this chapter. Look at it well! and, whatever may be thy lot in life, never put on a pitch-plaster in the dark; there is no knowing where it may end. For, as the moral poet sings,

> "Things done in darkness, when they come to light,
> Present, at times, an unbecoming sight—
> Like speckled clouds that show both black and white."

CHAPTER XIX.

GREGORY GRUFF WAVERS, AND WIDOW CLARKSON PLUNGES HIM STILL DEEPER IN LOVE.—HIS CONSULTATION WITH PARSON PREEDOM.—GREGORY INVENTS A NEW 'DAY-BOOK'—PROGRESS OF HIS PUPILS, ETC.

ALTHOUGH Gregory Gruff had promised to marry widow Clarkson, he had not named the particular time; and after his recovery, he seemed as loth to allude to the matter, as a man does to a will which he has reluctantly signed during his illness. In fact, he had so many things to do, such a number of persons to visit, and so much to put right that had gone wrong in the school during his short indisposition, that there was scarcely a minute left to think about his marriage, were he ever so much disposed:—at least such was the charitable construction the widow drew to herself. Indeed the worthy lady had a spice of pride about her, that is, about her own person; and knew right well how to throw in a thousand little endearments, which were able at any moment to overthrow all Gruff's graver speculations. She understood good generalship too well, to broach the subject openly; and had gained such a pretty, familiar ascendancy over Gregory, while he was ill, that it would have seemed unkind and unnatural to have left it off after he had promised to become her husband. Not that she liked his shrinking back, a jot more than the trouble of again bringing him forward; and as she began to fear that he had never as yet been thoroughly in love, she formed the resolution of 'sousing him head over ears' in it; and commenced her operations accordingly.

And now, she became every day more kind, and more familiar; she took a thousand little liberties, which she had never before ventured to

take, as if to show him, that although he was not, as yet, really her husband, she was nevertheless his very loving widow, and considered herself within a shade of being his most affectionate wife. Thus, if she had only to lean forward to stir the fire, or lift the kettle off, she could not do so without resting one hand on his knee; or if he had been out, she fancied the dust had settled upon his face and in the corners of his eyes, and she would wet the end of a towel, and with many endearing terms, make him hold up his head while she wiped his face. When her collar got crumpled, she came to Gruff to have it pulled down; if a pin was wrong in the back of her gown, she came to have it pulled out. Then she thanked him in such a way, and looked at him so sweetly, that Gregory was sometimes compelled to go down to Parson Preedom's, and prevail upon him to read a few pages of his manuscript 'History and Antiquities of Sutton-cum-Bottesford,' before he could again thoroughly recover himself. Had he been busied in drawing up any new plans for the school, she would prevail upon him to read them over; or leaning upon his shoulder, ask him if he was writing a love-letter; and sometimes Gruff would look up, much like a lion disturbed while in love with a shin of beef. But even such silent rebuffs as these only drew from her a longer sigh, and the natural kind-heartedness of Gruff was sure to prevail in a few more moments—and he would read over what he had written—and she was sure to praise it highly—and all would be again made up.

Then she was always leaving something about in Gregory's bed-room, either on the drawers, or chairs, or upon the bed itself; sometimes a collar, a bonnet, a front, or a slipper, for the widow had a very small and handsome foot; and trifling as such matters were, they sometimes played the very devil with Gregory. But the great master-stroke was, the hanging up of her own portrait in Gruff's chamber, even opposite the very foot of the bed. That portrait made sad havoc with him. There it hung—ever with the same quiet, killing look; let him turn whichever way he would, those tender eyes still followed him,—whether in bed or up, they were ever there; and sometimes Gruff gazed on it until he fancied the picture would leap clean out of the frame, and jump into bed to him. At other times it seemed to look as if it was about to give him his gruel—then it assumed the beautiful bashfulness with which it first proposed the pitch-plaster—anon it seemed to smile as when handing over his tea, or throwing the blanket over his shoulders, while he sat up to sip his arrow-root:—that portrait would have upset even the philosophy of an Epictetus.

Then there was something very reproachful in the little landscape which the artist had stuck under one arm; for there was a church in it. It seemed to say 'come and marry me'—and looked as if it had brought the church with it; and as the other hand bore a prayer-book, threatened to read the ceremony itself,—and, without the help of a parson, to marry the first comer. He never awoke in a morning, but those eyes seemed to reproach him for lying alone; he never went to bed at night without their appearing to follow him, as if they said 'Oh Mr. Gruff! how can you sleep by yourself!' They were the very pitch-plasters of his dreams,—asleep or awake, they stuck to him; and he seemed as if he could see them when he awoke in the middle of the darkest night. They had a language, all their own. Sometimes they said 'My Gruff! I love you!' then again, 'Have you forgotten your promise?' at another time, 'Remember how I have watched over, and attended upon you!' and in Gruff's tenderest moments, they seemed to say 'Look on this patient face! can you break my heart?' Then Gregory would sigh himself to sleep.

That picture did more towards bringing matters to a climax, than all the widow's previous kindness; and we would on this hint, secretly advise all mothers who have portionless daughters, to have their portraits taken at once, and presented to their wavering lovers. It will settle the business in no time; and if they can but get them hung in the 'Exhibition at the National Gallery,' they may make sure of a Marquis, providing the neck, &c. is not covered too 'indelicately vulgar' with drapery.

Widow Clarkson soon saw, as a very fashionable writer expresses it, 'how the physic worked;' and contrived to keep pace with the picture, taking care to put in such little touches as the painter could not; and although she never once mentioned marriage, yet she served up sighs with breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper, reserving the largest and heaviest last, when she took a little weak brandy-and-water along with dear Mr. Gruff, for company, on an evening, before they separated. She had hoped that Gregory might be taken ill while in bed; and had for a week or two reserved a very long, neat, night-gown, with ruffles at the wrists—and collar and cap to match, ready to put on at a minute's notice, to attend upon him; but alas! Gruff was again 'hearty as a buck!' so she sighed, and trusted to Providence and the portrait.

But, Gregory was far from feeling easy; and after the picture had, one morning, seemed to do everything but call him 'heart-breaker and deceiver,' he hurried off after breakfast to visit his old friend the

Clergyman; when, seating himself without ceremony in the library, he said, "I've made a great fool of myself, and promised to marry widow Clarkson! and although she says nothing, poor thing! yet I can see she is taking it deeply to heart, because I do not fulfil my promise."

"Promised to marry the widow!" exclaimed the parson, laying down his pen, and pushing away his manuscript, although he was at that moment busied on his 'History of Sutton-cum-Bottesford;' and had just reached a most interesting part, which treated upon the causes why more cottages were now erected than castles; and went on to prove that it was all owing to the downfall of chivalry, the increase of population, cotton-mills, steam-engines, and railroads, and how these improvements had gradually uprooted all that existed of feudal power, since it first received a slight check at the passing of Magna Charta, the abolition of the monasteries, and during the more 'peaceful' struggles of the 'Civil War' in the time of Cromwell. "Promised to marry the widow!" exclaimed the clergyman, looking up in astonishment; "I hope it is a sincere attachment! and yet you have taken me by surprise! how is this?"

"All owing to a pain in the back, and a pitch-plaster, my friend," replied Gruff. "The woman had very naturally some scruples about putting it on, which a promise of marriage removed; and which I believe saved my life."

"I have heard of court-plasters working marvellous wonders," said the clergyman, with a smile; "but a pitch-plaster is a new mode of wooing."

"That's what did it," said Gruff, briefly; "dreadful cold, as you know;—pain in my back;—necessary to have a pitch-plaster. Widow Clarkson's a woman of great delicacy, and naturally felt scrupulous about putting it on. So, to set her mind at rest, why I ——; but you see how it is."

"But why not have sent for me?" continued the clergyman; "you well know how gladly I should have waited upon you: you might just, by the same rule, have felt bound to marry the old woman, who nursed you the winter before last."

"No; it was to be," replied Gruff, shaking his head; "it's all fate! my friend,—fate! I knew, long ago, that it would happen. You may smile, but depend upon it our course is marked out for us before we are born; and if I was not to marry, ten to one I might be hung. Take away the *h* from *alter*, and you fulfil the same destiny; a halter sometimes does it."

"Much depends upon the spelling," said the parson; "though far be it from me to wish that you should break your promise. And when I call to mind the high praise you have from time to time bestowed upon the fair widow, I must naturally conclude that your own inclination has more to do with the matter than fate, as you term it; and—I wish you may live long and happily together."

"That's the only thing I fear," said Gruff; who, after all, was not without his doubts. "We go on very well together now; but marriage, at times, alters the best of women. And I have had all the grumbling to myself so long, and so much of my own way in every thing, that I am sure, if there was to be the least change in her conduct, we should lead what they call a 'cat and dog life.'"

"Well! well! would it not be more honest to mention these doubts to her before it is too late?" said the clergyman. "You are rich, and can well afford to allow her an annuity. Better do this, my friend, than make yourself miserable for life. Better break a promise hastily, and perhaps thoughtlessly made, than a vow solemnly pledged before God and man at the holy altar! This is the true virtue of necessity, and of the two evils choosing the least."

"It would be the death of her!" replied Gruff. "I can never bring myself to make such a proposal—the woman doats upon me—and I should never forgive myself were I to be the cause of her dying of a broken-heart—such things have been. No; I can but leave her after all. The allowance, or the annuity, or whatever you term it, must be the last resource. I must marry her!"

"Well, so be it," said the clergyman: "and now we will talk of other matters. I have heard from our mutual friend Godfrey Malvern, and fear that he has not succeeded in London according to his expectations. Not that he makes any particular complaint; but still he speaks as if it will be some time before he is fully prepared for what he calls his 'fair trial.'

"It is no more than I expected," replied Gregory, who was clear-sighted enough in most things, love excepted. "But I forgot to tell you, that before parting with our favourite Emma, at Northampton, I gave her a note for her husband, which was an order on a friend of mine in London to supply them with what money they might need from time to time. In fact, to supply them with twenty pounds a-month as long as they might require it."

"Then there is nothing to fear," said the clergyman, taking Gruff by the hand, and shaking it heartily. "He must succeed! God

bless you! God bless you! May you be as happy with the partner you have chosen, as we have been together through many long years of uninterrupted friendship. God bless you!"

Gruff was, with all his oddities, a man with a very tender heart; and there was something so sincere in the few simple words which the parson had given utterance to, that Gregory was compelled to wipe the moisture from his eyes, adding as an excuse for pulling out his handkerchief—"This cold still lingers in my eyes. And, respecting our friends in London, I half promised Emma that I would pay them a visit before the summer was past; and as soon as this affair is over, I shall probably take my—my wife with me. But I want you to go see how my new scholar comes on."

Gruff had much ado to get the word 'wife' out. It seemed somehow to stick in his throat as if it was too common and too comfortable a word, one which a man, like Gregory Gruff, had no business with; for when you looked at him you felt sure that he could never live with any one but an old crotchetty housekeeper, every way as odd as himself: for there are some men who look as if they were never born to be married, and such a man seemed Gregory Gruff.

Willing to humour his friend in every thing, the clergyman took up his hat, and walked out with Gregory to visit an old shopkeeper in the village,—one of Gruff's pupils in fact; a man, who never could either read or write, but had nevertheless commenced keeping his ledger on a new principle, and was working out one of Gregory Gruff's most original ideas on education.

"Well, my friend," said Gregory, entering the shop without ceremony, "do you find it answer? Can you keep your accounts better. I have come to show this gentleman your new ledger."

"You're very kind, Mr. Gruff," replied the old man, producing a large deal board, which was painted black, and covered with such rude hieroglyphics in chalk, as would have puzzled old Cheops himself. "You see I improve a little, sir," said the man, pointing to what resembled three soda-water bottles, with a hole drilled through the necks; "these stand for three red herrings, which John Linten had on trust. John has a long nose; and this round O, with a point to it, stands for John Linten."

"Very good, my friend, very good," exclaimed Gruff, rubbing his hands in delight; "and what are those two O's, one on the top of the other, with something like a pair of spectacles before them?"

"These," said the man, pausing for a few moments, "are the

quartern loaves, which Deborah Thrampton owes for. Poor woman! she has tender eyes; so I drawed a pair of spectacles as well as I could, and that's her name. Those bent strokes underneath, with a ring at the end, are two pipes; and that curly flourish, which looks like smoke, with half a pipe over it, means half an ounce of 'bacca;' for she smokes."

"You see, my friend," said Gregory, taking a proud pinch of snuff, and turning to the clergyman, "this good man is too old to learn writing and arithmetic, so, after a good deal of study, I hit upon this method, and now he can keep his accounts as well as the best banker's clerk. But what is this?" continued Gregory, pointing to what looked like another bottle of soda-water, standing upon four sticks, with a piece of string attached to it, and cracked across the middle.

"This," said the old shopkeeper, "is a pig,—these are its legs, that its tail;—and the stroke across means half a pig, and stands for half a pound of bacon. I cross the half again lengthways, when it means a quartern; for pounds I make whole pigs; so many pounds so many pigs—the same as the red-herrings. That's a shoe; William Fowler, that owes me for the bacon, is a shoemaker: and that stands for a pot of ale, which means, I must not trust him too much, because he's fond of drink."

"Excellent!" exclaimed Gregory, in a rapture; "find me a ledger with such an entry! It is the mind, my friend; once get them to think, and learning is all nonsense! I like to reward merit; here is a crown piece for the progress you have made. Now tell me what those squares mean, of so many sizes; those pyramids, straight lines, and varied marks? Which, I must confess, somewhat puzzle me."

"Those squares," answered the old shopkeeper, "stand for a great many things, and sometimes they bother me terribly. The first one either means a bath-brick, or a pound of soap; but I can't tell which, until I've counted over what I have by me. That triangle stands for a pound of sugar, the little one for half-a-pound—no, that's an extinguisher; but I'm not certain until I count. Tea, and mustard, and coffee, also often puzzle me strangely, because you see I wrap them all up alike. But when it's mustard, I make a dog's head with its mouth wide open, because it's biting, you see; so I put a lot of little dots inside for teeth; but it's a good deal of trouble. For tea, I make a fire, and draw a kettle as well as I can, with lots of smoke coming out of the spout; and for coffee I draw a house and windows, and that means a coffee-shop. Powder-blue, and soda, and treacle, and nails,

and candles, and soft soap, and all other hardware, I never sell on trust, because I haven't yet made up my mind what kind of a drawing I shall hit upon. So those are all ready-money articles, excepting pins and tape; and for pins I make a straight line with a knob at the top, and for tape a great long one. But you see I've so many things, and they require a deal of thought, before one can make up one's mind. And I have more quarrelling than ever with my customers; for some of them want to get off for only paying for a red herring, when they've had a pound of bacon, and wont believe that legs mean pigs."

The clergyman laughed heartily, and Gruff almost emptied his snuff-box as they walked home—he said not a word about the 'mind.'

Poor Gregory! it grieves us to say that, a few days after, he married the widow. But we must leave them to pass the honey-moon at Sutton-cum-Bottesford, while we return to London.

CHAPTER XX.

IN WHICH OUR STORY RETROGRADES, AND THE READER FINDS HIMSELF IN LOCK'S FIELDS.—ENDING WITH A SPEECH WHICH OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN DELIVERED BY THE NEW MEMBER FOR BETTERVOTE.

OUR story must now be carried back to the evening on which Emma arrived in London, and the reader be made more fully acquainted with an event which at that time took place: it might have been mentioned earlier without either causing a stagnation in trade, or affecting the funds,—but it was not; and that is the reason why it is here recorded. On this, or that, very evening, then, there stood at the bar of the Swan with-two-necks, a man, rather shabbily dressed, with a tumbler of brandy-and-water before him. There was something about this man's countenance very difficult to describe—something striking in it; and yet at a first glance, it puzzled the beholder to find out what this 'something' was. In his younger days he might have been very good-looking; his eyes were large, his nose well-shaped, his lips thin; and there was a firmness about the mouth, which told, that altogether it must once have been a fine face. But now there was a care-worn hollowness about the eyes, as if they had shrunk back in alarm, at

either witnessing so many crimes, or so much misery; and the mouth, though still firm, seemed to have no corresponding feature; all around appeared to have fallen—to have given way, and hardened down into an expression which was no longer its own; even the nose now looked disproportioned to that thin, sharp, haggard countenance. There was a hungry, unnatural look about the man's face; it seemed as if it wanted feeding up, and filling out, to make it look like itself. It was a face upon which the wear and tear of time had been at work, and had made far greater inroad and havoc than the ordinary ravages of twenty more long years. It looked as if it had once belonged to a good, and happy man, but was now in the possession of a bad, and miserable one—like the remains of a once respectable house which had parted with its good tenant; windows, and doors, and walls still there, but sadly out of repair, broken, dirty, dim and comfortless; so much so, that when you looked at it, it made you sigh, as you recalled the light, the warmth, and the happiness which once shone there, but had now left only a melancholy wreck behind. Such was the appearance of the man who stood at the bar of the Inn, when Emma entered and enquired after her husband. Emma gave her name as Mrs. Malvern; but the servant not seeming to understand her, she said "Tell him that a lady named Ingledew from Sutton-cum-Bottesford, wishes to see him;" for she remembered that he oftener called her by her maiden-name than any other. It was then that the bar-maid came forward, and informed her of Godfrey's departure to his new lodgings. The man we have attempted to describe, was just in the act of lifting the tumbler to his lips, when the names of 'Ingledew,' and 'Sutton-cum-Bottesford,' seemed to act like a spell upon him: he was, to use a very expressive phrase, 'struck all of a heap.' He stood motionless; his eyes slowly expanding to a full, fixed, astonished stare, while his mouth remained open, just as it was when the glass was within an inch of his lips; but instead of drinking, he unconsciously lowered his arm, and the liquor again stood before him untasted. The entrance of the young traveller—her fainting, and the sudden tumult before the bar, caused him to shift his position; and while the young lady was removed to another room, the man was left there, for several moments alone. It was during this brief interval, that his eye alighted on the note, which, as we have before stated, had, amid the hurry, fallen on the floor. This was the note Gregory Gruff had given to Emma at Northampton, without once apprizing her of its contents. The man at the bar picked up the note unperceived, broke open the

seals in an instant, and, without noticing the writing in the envelope, read as follows:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

Ask the bearer no questions, for he belongs to that almost extinct race,—the proud and sensitive; but supply him with such sums of money as he may from time to time require, at not less than twenty pounds a-time. You can deduct the amount from my dividends. I shall perhaps be in London before the summer is over; then I will explain more fully. Send me down all the new works that are published on Astrology and Nativities: I have not yet cast your planet. Was it one o'clock at noon, or night when you were born? I must know this before proceeding further, as both Mars and Venus were then in the ascendant.

Until death, Yours faithfully,

GREGORY GRUFF."

This portion of the note was not intended to meet the eyes of Godfrey Malvern; it was addressed to a wealthy banker in Lombard-street, and a few lines scribbled on the envelope, contained all our hero's instructions, which were that whenever he was in want of money, he was to deliver the enclosed, per address. The stranger made himself acquainted with its contents in a few moments, then thrust it into his pocket before the bar-maid returned; and gulping down his brandy-and-water at a draught, departed.

On the following day he delivered the document at the banking-house in Lombard-street; no questions were asked, a slip of paper and a pen were handed to him, and he signed the name as 'Godfrey Malvern;' received the twenty pounds in bank notes, and went his way. Without changing one of the notes, he went into a low pot-house in Westminster, and there he sat drinking gin-and-water until nearly midnight: the waiter had let the reckoning stand over, as the man had displayed one of the bills; and it was just upon twelve o'clock when he discharged the reckoning, and ordered a cab to drive him home. "They shall no longer want!" muttered the man to himself, as he emptied his glass; "I will go home first—I have neglected them too long; I am a villain—a villain!"

The landlord brought in the change; and as he laid down the four sovereigns, one by one, and counted out the silver, looked at the stranger, as if to say, "It's nothing to me! but how did you come in possession of this money?"

The stranger raised his deep-sunk eyes, as if he read the landlord's thoughts; then pocketing the change, said, "It's all right! and now I want a cab to drive me home to Lock's-fields."

"You've a mind to let them know you've come," said the landlord, glancing keenly at his guest. "It's not often a cab drives into Lock's-fields; I seldom used to see one when I lived there."

"Times are altered, sir," replied the stranger, briefly; "I want a bottle of gin to take home with me.—Here is the money for it! quick—I hear the cab at the door! You have your business to attend to, and I have mine."

"Certainly! that's true enough!" rejoined the host; and he hurried off to his bar.

When the cabman enquired where he was to drive to, the stranger answered that there was no name to the street in which he lived. "There was a murder committed in it some years ago," continued the man; "and until that is forgotten, it will remain without a name.* Put on the check-string, and I will tell you when to stop, and where to turn, and give you half-a-crown when you have driven me home."

The cabman drove onward, and we shall precede him, to another change of scenery. "In the grave," says Chaucer, "there is no company;" and were one part of London buried 'full fathom five,' it would never be missed by the other; for in such spots as we are about to describe, 'there is no company,'—the wealthy and the titled great come not there, misery has only misery for companionship. Any one walking from the Elephant and Castle, down the New Kent-road, would be struck by the goodly appearance of the houses, the

* This is a fact! A man murdered a woman within a hundred yards of where the Author then lived; and afterwards cut his own throat. The name of the street was soon changed, although crowds continued to visit it long after the murder.—A milkman lived opposite the Author's door; and instead of white-washing his house, to make it emblematical of his trade, he had covered the front as high as the basement of the chamber-window with glaring red-ochre. Amongst the numerous visitors whom this murder called 'out,' was a group of children. They halted before the 'red house,' in mistake; and the eldest of the party exclaimed, as he looked up in astonishment, "Oh! crikee, Bill! didn't it spout out like pop! it's nearly reached the tiles. It was a fine murder! wasn't it?" The name of the place is now scarcely known, saving to a few of the old inhabitants in the neighbourhood. Even the old postman, with his 'angel-visits,' is gone; and a new one has succeeded him.

"It was a merry spot in days of yore,
But something ails it now—the place is cursed!"

neatness of the gardens on the left-hand side, and the picturesque effect of the fountain with its little sheet of water, and its bending Triton, who, throughout the sunny summer-day blows the 'arched silver' through his crooked horn. Let him, however, strike down one of these streets opposite to where the fountain plays, and thread his way for half a mile or so from the right-hand side of the road, and he will find himself in the locality of LOCK'S-FIELDS. Here spreads out a huge morass of misery, a vast space of low, damp land, intersected with noisome ditches and unhealthy patches of garden-ground, broadening over what is still called Walworth-common; and hemmed in on the one hand by the long line of Walworth-road beyond the turnpike, and on the other, deep and far across, the old Kent or Greenwich road. Here stretch scores of streets, which at night are utterly dark, and in one of these dark streets the cabman halted; for not a lamp burns in this dismal district, although within it sleep nightly thousands of our fellow-creatures. Oh, what a lesson would the true statistics of this almost unknown district furnish forth for our modern wise-acres! But there is now a police-station formed near the centre of this swamp —one step taken to produce either a brutal, or a blessed improvement.

In the windows of almost every other inhabited house you see a bill, announcing 'Unfurnished Apartments to Let;' in almost every street numbers of houses shut up, and huge padlocks on the doors, which tell that the late wretched inhabitants have been rendered still more wretched, their few goods sold, and themselves either driven to the parish, or, with their bed of straw, housed in some new and wretched habitation. Houses there are, which have never had a coat of paint on them for years, and many of these must once have been respectable-looking places. But now the broken windows are repaired with paper; or, where the inhabitants are too indolent even to do this, huge, unsightly, and filthy garments are thrust into the broken panes, and left there until summer comes, and the cool air is then welcome. There stand sheds, in which the now useless dog-carts are placed, unless the owner is still compelled to wheel out the hearth-stone himself, or drag his load of 'cats'-meat' along the streets by his own strength. There dwell your dog and bird fanciers, living in little huts, among dogs and fowls, rabbits, birds, and guinea-pigs; and surrounded with children, who all day long play in the dirt before the doors, and yet look as healthy and fresh in their filth as potatoes just turned out of the mould. And these little bare-footed, uncombed children, take their baskets (often patched with cloth, when the bottom is gone) and buy

the fat dirty slices of pork and bacon which lie in the neighbouring shops, marked threepence or fourpence a-pound, and sopping their potatoes in the fat, lick their fingers and thrive, learning to swear almost as soon as they can talk. Here and there you see a cook-shop, and in the window about noon smoke great suet-puddings with lumps of fat as large as walnuts in them; and great black flat tins filled with baked potatoes, and swimming in the grease of pork which has been cooked, because it would keep no longer; while at the windows the little dirty children stand 'looking hunger' at the savoury viands, and flattening their little noses against the panes. A penny to purchase a piece of pudding, or a few of the brown-baked and greasy potatoes, and they are happy, and can play with light and merry hearts, until hunger or sleep again visits them. Others contrive to keep a poor horse, high of bone and low of flesh, one bought at the 'knackers,' and cruelly saved from death; and this is yoked to a cart, the cart itself tumbling to pieces, and when not in use, the owner is ever mending it, driving in a nail here and there, then going his daily round, and crying 'Dust O!' Before his door stands a mountain of ashes; this his wife riddles for the cinders, the dog meanwhile feeding from the filthy heap. During his absence his children turn it over, and pick out the bones and rags, and all are thrown into separate heaps, and then sold. So they live in dirt, drunkenness, and misery.

Then comes a shop, where they sell cats'-meat, coals, cow-heels, coke, wood, and tripe. And ever and anon a load of coal comes in, and black clouds of dust arise as they are emptied in the shop, settling on the cow-heels and the tripe, and the pillars of pudding; yet these they eat all up; and, as one of them once remarked in our hearing, 'the dust does instead of pepper.' From morning to night the pot-boys are ever carrying out beer; from 'early morn to dewy eve,' it is 'beer,' still 'beer!'—breakfast and tea cannot be made without beer. Even the little children who can but just walk, and are sent to fetch it in their own jugs, stop at every turning to taste of this 'beer;' and as they grow up they learn to despise tea, and milk, and all such feminine et-ceteras, and grow brown and broad on beer, until gin comes and 'strikes flat the thick rotundity!'

Yet trade is carried on even here:—they make those blue boxes, such as hatters give away, when their customers purchase a 'four-and-ninepenny.' They bottom chairs with cane, such chairs as, when complete and coloured to resemble rose-wood, sell for twelve shillings the half-dozen. They cut and bind up wood, and it takes them a day to

sell what they have done up the day before, at three bundles a-penny. Sometimes you see a poor mechanic carrying home the skeleton of a sofa on his head, or part of a French bedstead; then return with a small portion of wood, of which to make others the following week. He works for the 'trade,' the shops that ticket low, and sell still lower; and make such chairs and bedsteads, that if Dandy Dinmont threw himself into them in his rough riding-coat, as he did in the prison-scene in 'Guy Mannering,' he would leave nothing but 'a wreck behind.' Here all streets are without water, saving what they get from shallow wells;—for what company would lay down pipes in such a neighbourhood? The children are seen with rusty cans, and battered tin-kettles, going from house to house to beg water—no marvel they soon become so fond of beer. If a fire breaks out here, even the landlord is glad, for he gets rid of a bad tenant and a bad house at the same time, and there is still the ground to let—they need no fire-engines who have nothing worth saving. Many of the wooden sheds, and tumble-down houses, a strong man might throw over into the ditches, which seem to stand sluggishly as if yawning for the ruins. Beside many of the ditches grow stunted elder-bushes; they are hung with broken saucepans, rags, and filth, which the inhabitants were too weak or too lazy to throw into the ditches. There live your men who sell cheap flounders and soles in the morning, and on an afternoon cry shrimps, water-cresses, and periwinkles. There walk home your women of a night, who sit at street-ends in the day, with little piles of withered apples, oranges, and cocoa-nut shells before them, and are begrimed through roasting chesnuts. Here is stowed away the tall theatre in which Punch and Judy exhibit in our streets, the deep drum, and the shrill pipes; the big caravan, the poor horse that draws it, and the dwarf or giant it contains, have here their home. The manly-voiced woman, who cries 'Walk in, only one penny!' and the velvet-coated man who shows the last murder in his peep-show, here sit side by side, and drink their beer, smoke their pipes, swear and fight,—then sleep in peace. Here a board announces that 'messages are delivered, and errands run.' But every one there is his own messenger, and goes his own errand; and if a postman appears in the neighbourhood, or a double-knock is heard at any of the doors, every head is seen projecting outside all the way down the street. They walk into each other's houses without ceremony, while they are friends—and when they have quarrelled, never speak, except to 'blow each other up' for weeks after: unless sickness or sorrow comes; then the past is

forgotten; for they are still true to one another when misery bares her arm. 'Heaven tempers the wind to the shorn lamb!' and here thousands are born, live, and die, and in some instances find more real sympathy and kindness in the last struggle, than others who end their days in the 'high estate' of the cold formal world. Poor, and ragged, and ill-housed as they too often are, they are not altogether miserable. They help each other, although they talk about it afterwards. They have their bright and dark sides — their whims and ways, bad passions, and kind feelings, just like the high and wealthy, the great and the titled. But poverty and crime dwell here!

Oh God! what have we not witnessed amid these scenes!—Blear-eyed drunkenness, prowling theft, and red-handed murder!—for here shrieks and cries for help are too common to be regarded. Here they turn in their wretched beds, and say, "It is only so and so, quarrelling with his woman;" and, stupified with the fumes of 'turpentined gin,' are soon again asleep. Beauty dwells here; but not such as God made. Women live here—too many, alas!—faded and fallen!—the majesty gone, the virtue worn and wasted, the goodness, and kindness, and gentleness of their nature lost, battered, hardened, and now cruel and selfish. No Adam to lead them forth when they fell, they left the garden of their Eden alone; those who shared in their guilt, had long deserted them. They had no bosom left to lean and weep upon. Drink dried up their tears, and burnt up their hearts; their sighs were lost amid the loud swearing of their companions. No law protected them, and they soon hated all laws; none loved them, and now they have no love left.

Here they drag out their existence from day to day; but no one comes to ask how?—they live, die, and are buried; and their names are never known! The virtuous and the vicious are swept away together; those who were honest and industrious, and those who lived by the most disreputable means, sleep side by side in the same churchyard: how they lived, or died, no one cares to enquire. And this is in London!—in England!—in our own time! aye!—even now whilst we are writing, and now whilst thou art reading this very page.

Is there no remedy for these evils?—Yes! the Union Workhouse, the limited diet, and the worse than prison-discipline! Poor souls! God help you! Drink on! swear on! rob! murder! get imprisoned! transported! hung!—there are only a few such poor fools as ourselves, who will heave a sigh for ye! True charity comes not near your doors! —the really kind-hearted know not that ye exist!—the high, the

haughty, the proud and selfish, wish ye had never had a being!—Although the arm of Charity girdles England in her embrace, she knows not all she enfolds! The dear mother, who clasps all her numerous offspring at once, sometimes squeezes those in the middle too tightly:—let her know that ye are hurt!—Squeal! scratch! bite! swear! yell! shriek! howl! moan! roar! and in the Devil's name, make yourselves heard!

England! where is thy glory?—Alas! not here! Thy boasted benevolence to the poor Blacks is an empty farce! a hollow boast! an unbecoming 'swagger!' Are not these poor creatures thy children? Harsh! unnatural mother! why dost thou shake them from thy bosom? It is thy fault, and thine only, that they are what they are. Thou hast made laws to chasten—not protect them! Poverty, and misery, and wretchedness, and ignorance, that in the olden time were administered unto by the hands of angels, of saints now in heaven—that were looked upon with the eyes of pity, and which it was considered a virtue to protect,—how are they treated now? Your New Poor-Laws answer!

England is the land of Charity!—open-handed Charity selected this green island for her abode. Here she reared her sons and daughters; and as they grew up, blessed them, and sent them as peaceful ambassadors to other countries. When they were gone, strange children gathered about her old age! She still dealt out her gifts cheerfully to those around her; but they, alas, were robbers! they received and kept what she intended for others. They were hard-hearted and selfish commissioners!—We will close this savage scene.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONTAINS TWO SCENES: ONE OF MISERY AND REMORSE; THE OTHER OF LOVE WITHOUT MONEY—SHEWING ALSO HOW EMMA 'RAISED THE WIND.'

THERE was no thoroughfare through the dark street up which the cabman drove; nothing but a narrow passage, with a winding and murderous look, that led into another similar street, and this again had the same narrow outlet. It was an awful-looking place! and what

little could be seen, now midnight had dropped her gloomy curtain over it, looked grim, ghastly, and ruinous. The man got out, paid the driver, gave him a drink of gin from the bottle, then knocked at the door. There was something very sad and melancholy in the low sounds which seemed to buzz about the place, and fill up the pauses between each knock, when the rumbling of the cab had died away—in the faint crying of some sickly child, in the husky voice of the wretched mother who endeavoured to soothe it—in the subdued voices of the drunken inhabitants opposite, who had lowered the loud tones in which they were quarrelling, to a deep dreadful grumbling:—even down to the muffled growl of some dog which had been disturbed in its sleep. Again the man knocked, but the inmates seemed sound asleep—for even sleep visited this abode of misery, the only comforter who came there; and seemed to settle down as calmly upon some of those miserable dwellings, as if they contained not a care.

At length a light glanced between the chinks of the window-shutters—then the voice of a female was heard at the door, inquiring, "Who's there?"

"It is only me, Mary," replied the man in a trembling and altered tone of voice, as if labouring under some deep emotion; "undo the door."

The door was opened, and closed again instantly; and the woman having placed the candlestick upon the table without speaking, sank upon a chair, and burst into a flood of tears. The husband spake not, but pressing one hand to his forehead, as if his brow was pained by some burning thought, which he wished to push back again into the beating cell from whence it had arisen, he, with the other hand, drew back the remnant of an old curtain, revealing the forms of two little children, who, locked in each other's arms, lay sound asleep upon a torn and dirty mattress, which was spread upon the floor. What little covering they had was almost worn to tatters; and their white rounded limbs peeped out through this 'looped and windowed raggedness.'

The wretched father stood for a few moments, and gazed in silence upon his children, until the dark furrows upon his brow gradually unbent, and the deep stifled sighs which seemed to rise thicker and faster, as if they would choke him, broke through all the hard barriers which engirded his heart, and came forth in one loud harrowing groan as he sank upon the floor; and burying his face between the children, he awoke them by his loud weeping.

"Oh, Georgy, daddy's come!" said the eldest, sitting up and throwing his little arms around his father's head, mingling the white of his elbow and shoulder among the dark hair; "Oh, daddy's come! and mammy won't cry to-morrow; and we shall have some bread! Get up, and kiss him, Georgy."

Georgy raised his little flaxen head from the flock-bolster, which was his only pillow; and the father shifting his arm, drew the little fellow closely to him, and kissed him affectionately.

"It 's been raining on poor daddy's face," said the eldest, taking up the corner of the ragged coverlet to wipe off the tears. "Poor daddy's been all in the rain to fetch us some bread! Poor daddy!" and the dear child uttered the last sentence in such a tone of true and affectionate pity, as he kissed his father, that the wretched man groaned again in his deep agony, and felt how unworthy he was of such pure and unselfish love.

The poor wife could no longer sit a silent witness of the scene, but rose half-dressed from the broken chair, and wiping the tears from her thin care-worn cheeks, while she bent over her husband, said, "Dear John! take it not so to heart; they are not hungry to-night; they had ——." But the remembrance of the many nights they had gone to-bed cold, crying, and hungry, and there lain until they sobbed themselves to sleep upon her aching heart, came across her memory, and, no longer able to control her feelings, she again sank sobbing on the chair.

"Mary! dear Mary!" said the wretched husband, now rising and throwing his arm around her, "I have been a villain to you! to my poor dear children! to myself! God knows, I am a villain! But, Mary!—poverty, wretchedness, disappointment; and yet," added he, checking himself, "you have borne all these, and are still the same. No! no! I have made myself what I am; a wretch unworthy of you!"

"Say not so, dear John," exclaimed the wife; "you will be better now—I know you will. It is not poverty, nor misery, that makes me unhappy; but when I never see you for days—when I have to bear it all, and have no one to speak a word of comfort to me! no one to share it with me!—it is that—that which is breaking my heart! Oh, John! if you could but feel what I feel, when hour after hour, day after day, and night after night, I sit listening for your footsteps, and you never come!—if you could but feel what I feel, while expecting you, you would not leave me so lonely, and so long alone! I know

you would not, if you knew how much I still love you! Poverty can never change me—never!"

As the varied and fitful light falls and changes upon the remaining ruins of some once noble castle—now glancing upon it grey and gloomy, and giving it a still sadder look—then coming down duskily, and seeming to make the whole pile one mass of shadow—anon stealing upon it soft and silvery, adding a new beauty to every rent and chasm, which storm or strife have made; so changed the almost indescribable countenance of the wretched husband. And when he looked fondly on his affectionate wife, and promised that he would never again give her cause to complain, and threw down the money upon the table, telling her that the children should no more want for bread—then did the unclouded sunlight seem to fall full upon the fortress, and give to the ruin a softer and more imposing light, than it had ever worn in its brightest or proudest days. But no imagery can describe the change which that torn and battered countenance underwent; for still it looked like a ruin—or a dusty time-worn statue, with the sun-light upon it.

The poor woman looked at the money, then at her husband, and without touching it, pointed to where it lay, and said, "John, how came you by this money?"

"I found it," answered he, without hesitation; "ask no more questions. I neither won it by gaming, nor yet stole it. It is yours now;" and he glanced down upon the floor as he spoke, for there was something so fixed and doubtful in the gaze of his wife, that he could no longer look at her face.

"If you have found it," said she, "it is your duty to endeavour to find out the right owner, and return it. There is sure to be some inquiry made, and perhaps some reward offered. Unless you do this, it will never do us any good; nor will I touch a single farthing of it."

"Then I will," said the husband, sweeping it up, and again placing it in his pocket. He then took up a broken tea-cup, and filling it with gin, emptied it at a draught; then sat down, with his forehead buried in the palm of his hand, and remained for several moments in deep and thoughtful silence. "Mary," said he, at length speaking, "I have told you the truth, I found it; or, at least, the order for it. No questions were asked me; any other person might have received it in the same way. But this is not all: last night I saw Ingledew's daughter—he, who is now called squire—who revels and rules over Sutton-cum-Bottesford. While I, that was honest, until

he made me otherwise—I who, fool-like, held the ladder, up which he climbed, am here. He secured an estate, I this miserable abode—he rolls in plenty, and is weighed down with riches, while I am doomed to poverty and rags, I who could reduce him to disgrace and beggary to-morrow. But I will hunt him out; face to face will I meet him. I have been honest too long—I have been rightly rewarded."

He again had recourse to the gin-bottle; then paced the floor with a hurried and excited step, seeming deaf to all his wife said to him. He looked like a man who had resolved to do some daring deed; but was still undecided upon the manner of executing it. So he drank on, until he sank into his chair and fell asleep; and in his dreams he confronted the squire.

But Godfrey Malvern and his beautiful young wife have been too long neglected, and we must once more change the scene, to glance at new troubles. The struggles of the virtuous and of the vicious seem nearly alike, although the latter carries its hidden sting—the painful feelings of remorse. Want and privation, disguise themselves however they may, are never welcome guests! We may preach up philosophy, and extol patience—argue that all human sufferings are but for a time, and that all troubles are sent for the best: this is the compulsion of content, and may suit saints, but sinners like ourselves can never bear these things long without grumbling. Silver and gold have, we scarcely know how, become very essential to earthly happiness. Philosophy and resignation furnish but poor food, wretched clothing, and indifferent lodgings; for in this age poverty and misfortune have been legally branded with the names of vagabond and rogue. The pauper and the pickpocket are but packed off to different prisons, in which the latter too often meets with the best fare.

And Godfrey's little stock of money had by this time dwindled very low, and Emma's brown silk purse sunk day by day, until the very rings seemed inclined to slip off, and wander in search of employment, for now they had scarcely any thing to hold. Still the young couple had managed to pay their way, without having as yet run a farthing into debt, although their gin-drinking landlady had long since discovered that they were growing very poor. But there was a natural delicacy about Emma's management of matters, which Godfrey was some time in discovering. She began to retrench almost imperceptibly; she sank into a kind of silent economy without her husband at first perceiving it, and for a long time kept him ignorant of the real state of the funds.

She began by hinting that it would be better to buy in their butter in smaller quantities; that the coffee did not taste so well after it had been some time in the house; an egg suited her better for dinner than so much meat; and she fancied mould candles threw out a much brighter light than wax ones did. These and many other similar evasions did she adopt; and although by such means she deprived herself of an hundred little comforts, which she had been used to from a child, still the same sunny smile ever bloomed upon her sweet face, and the same endearing tones of music fell upon her husband's ear. Poverty had not changed her love; she smiled, and suffered with him her heart had chosen, and repined not.

"Emma," said Godfrey one morning, after having watched for some time at the window, and seen the postman pass, without leaving him a letter as he expected; "Emma, the rent is due to-day, and I have not yet received the money which was to have been paid last month for my contributions to the magazine. I know not the state of your purse, love," continued he, throwing down a crown-piece upon the table; "but this is all I possess, and I cannot bear the thoughts of owing yonder woman down stairs a shilling for a moment."

"I will pay her before dinner-time," answered Emma, suppressing a sigh; for she had but seven shillings left. "But you was saying you wanted some paper, and I should like a walk this fine morning. Shall I go fetch it for you, my dear?"

"I will go with you, love," said Godfrey, "if you will be kind enough to ring the bell for my boots. There will be no letter before noon, if one comes at all."

"He may come himself," replied Emma, "and it will not look well for us both to be from home. I shall not be long, and we will walk out together towards evening; it will be cooler and pleasanter then."

"Well, be it so," said Godfrey; "though I never can write a line while you are out; and shall only stand gazing idly from the window to watch your return."

She put on her bonnet and shawl, held up her face and kissed her husband; then took up her little silk bag, and departed. Had Godfrey watched her narrowly, he would have seen the beautiful necklace she took out of one of the drawers; and in the centre of which stood a rich brilliant—it had been worn in former years by her mother. Emma threaded her way along Hercules'-buildings, up Homer-street,

and through Carlisle-lane, until she came into Westminster-road, to a jeweller's, who had before repaired one or two of her trinkets.

The jeweller was a white-headed old man, with a ruddy, benevolent countenance. There was a kind fatherly look about the fine old fellow, which won your heart at once; and when Emma entered, he accosted her with, "Well, my pretty darling, has another golden link given way? Ay! I wish I was young, and a prince. But you have left your old familiar smile behind you! What's amiss? what's amiss?"

"Nothing," replied Emma; "what should there be amiss? I have brought an old family trinket with me," added she, placing the necklace upon the counter; "thinking that you could best inform me, how I might—might—exchange it—or dispose of it altogether; for it is too old-fashioned for me."

The old man took it up, and examined it narrowly; then looking at her attentively, said, "If you want to sell it, I can find one who will give you its full value. It is too costly for me to purchase."

"I do!" answered Emma, glancing upon the floor; "I wish to sell it."

"John," exclaimed the old man, calling his son into the shop, "stop the first west-end omnibus that passes, while I go and put on my coat. Sit down, my pretty darling; I shall be with you again within an hour."

"Then I will return within that time," said Emma.

"Shall I call upon you?" enquired the old man. "I know where you reside."

"No," answered Emma; "I thank you kindly! I would rather" ——she looked down abashed, and stood for a few moments in silence.

"Well! well! in an hour, then," replied the jeweller.

"We can't be kept waiting in this here manner," shouted the conductor from without. "Are you coming, sir?"

"Don't you see I have come?" answered the old man, bundling into the omnibus. "Now drive on, and earn your sixpence like a good boy, without grumbling."

Emma went and purchased the paper, then returned home, and after having waited some time, said to her husband, "Godfrey, I think I should like a boiled chicken to-day for dinner. May I go out and select one? You have praised my good judgment before time; and the poor girl you know brings whatever is given to her.

I will but look one out, and order it to be sent home. Can you spare me for another half hour?"

"I will, my love, if you request it," answered Godfrey. "I have two letters to write, and shall have finished them within that time. But do not go out without me after this to-day."

"I will not," answered Emma; "and when you have finished the letters, remember," added she, shaking her pretty white finger, "no more writing until night."

Godfrey promised that all should be done as she desired. When Emma reached the bottom of the stairs, the landlady stood ready to receive her with a curtsey and—her bill.

Emma took the bill, bowed, and said, "I will settle it when I return; I shall not be a great while."

"Just run after her," said the gin-drinking brute to Cinderella, "and see if she's going to the pawn-shop. I haven't seen her with the black satin gown on for nearly a month; and her fine gold chain, I dare say, is gone long before this. Marry, come up! she'll want to borrow the pan to do her own washing in another week or two!"

Cinderella put on her bonnet and shawl without speaking a word; but instead of following Emma, went into the mangling woman's who lived in a neighbouring court, and there sat down and had a 'good cry.'

The jeweller had obtained ten pounds for the necklace, which he handed over to Emma, refusing to take more than half-a-crown for the time he had lost; and accepting with reluctance an additional shilling for what he had expended in omnibuses. He would rather not have taken a shilling from her; but he thought she might feel much happier, if she went away with the impression that what he had done was according to the usual forms of business. So he said, "You have nearly paid me 'two-and-a-half per cent. for my trouble,' and that is more than I get sometimes after giving long credit."

Thus the 'wolf was driven from the door;' and thus they went on again, just living from 'hand to mouth,' until the sum was expended.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN WHICH WE ASCEND ANOTHER STEP UP THE LADDER OF OUR STORY—MEET WITH AN UNEXPECTED ADVENTURE, AND GIVE TWO MORE SCENES—THEN LEAVE THE READER, TO COMMENCE ANOTHER CHAPTER.

WE have remarked in a former chapter, that very few authors become famous all at once. Indeed we scarcely know a single instance of one blazing into notoriety suddenly. The world may believe that they have done so; but in almost every instance, we, who know more of these matters than the generality of readers, can point out some dark nook in which they have laboured on for months, and even years, and their names have scarcely ever been heard of. Those who would but take the trouble to turn over the pages of the 'Old Monthly Magazine' for the last ten years, would rise convinced of the truth of this assertion, to say nothing of the higher order of periodicals. True fame burns with a slow and steady blaze. Great and astonishing genius too soon consumes itself in its own flame. The wick burns too rapidly for the tallow. Neither Spenser, Shakspeare, nor Milton, rose up and shook the world without giving it. warning. The great and grand tempest slowly announces itself—the 'side puff' comes suddenly, and is as suddenly forgotten. These are bad images; but they must pass for want of better.

Godfrey Malvern was destined to become a little—a very little light; to have his place in the far-off perspective of a mighty temple, the entrance to which is so grand, and so gigantic, that the beholder can scarcely think of the remote line of dwindling busts, which have, nevertheless, each its marked and separate niche: from Shakspeare to Shelley, from Burns to Bloomfield :—it is time, not man, who shapes the golden laurels which future generations take up and twine unbidden around the mighty brows that were formed to wear them. Fate marked the heads they were to fit; and though hurled confused amid a heap of ruins, they will at last be picked up unbroken, for the 'heart' of the stone can never be shattered.

True genius neither pines nor murmurs after fame, but bears patiently the golden load which the gods have encumbered him with; and when

he throws it down at his journey's end, rests satisfied that the day must come when the world will discover that his burthen was not dross. The tall man stoops beneath the dignity of his own height; your little fellow only walks with his neck broken backwards, exclaiming, until he is black in the face—'look at me! look at me!'

Godfrey Malvern both knew and felt all this; he was conscious of his own power: neither poverty nor privation could alter him. The burning admiration he felt when perusing the works of the great authors—the kindling fire which blazed through his heart when wandering alone among the beauties of nature—the real and unaffected fervour he had for the natural and the beautiful, convinced him that he was a true poet. He had analyzed his own emotions, and found that he possessed a pleasure beyond the reach of ambition—a happiness above the far stretch of fame's long arm—a treasure which he could share with solitude—a jewel he could wear in the dark without calling upon the world to admire it; he knew he possessed the secret which keeps alive the light of the everlasting lamp, and sheds splendour on the untrodden and solitary steps that drop down beyond the gloomy doors of the grave. The bleak winds might blow bitterly upon him—all without be cold and dreary—it mattered not: the mantle of poetry enveloped him, and he walked along concealing the folded sunshine which shed its warm beams upon his heart: without might be all darkness—within there shone a glorious light. It might but be the glow-worm's rays, but it was a glow-worm sacred to the gods. This feeling cheered him amid all his poverty and suffering; he knew that a time would come when his writings would be read—when hundreds would greedily devour the thoughts which he had given utterance to. So he worked on without murmuring, conscious that the hour would come in due time when his name and his writings must be recognized. He still continued to contribute to the Old Monthly Magazine; but what he wrote was literally buried, so limited was its circulation at that period. Indeed the editor could but ill afford to pay at all for contributions. Thus they were compelled to sell article after article, and live upon the produce; for although Emma had written several times to her father, he had never answered one of her letters, nay had even latterly gone so far as to refuse to take them in; all hope in that quarter was therefore at an end. Godfrey was too proud to apply to either the clergyman or Gregory Gruff for assistance; and was of course ignorant of what the latter had done for him. Emma had also her own feelings on the matter; and while her husband endured all

hardships without murmuring, she felt it her duty to share them with him without complaining, although she was by this time far advanced in that stage which promised soon to make her a mother. Their funds had indeed fallen so low, that they began to look after cheaper apartments, for their brutal landlady had become so emboldened as to offer them the third-floor front room, with its turn-up bedstead.

It was one afternoon, after a long search for cheaper lodgings, that they had quitted St. James' Park; for Emma had complained of weariness, and had been resting herself for a few moments on one of the seats. In crossing the front of the Horse-guards, Godfrey had dropped his stick, and during the few brief moments he stopped to pick it up, Emma halted in the middle of the road, and had a very narrow escape from being run over by a carriage. Whether the coachman was drunk, or only in a rage at having to pull up his horses so suddenly, there was scarcely time to notice; he, however, swore a deep oath, and struck Emma with the lash of his whip. All was the work of an instant. Godfrey only saw the lash descend; and like an enraged lion, sprang forward and dragged the reins from the coachman's hands, then struck him such a blow over the face, as broke his stick to shivers. A crowd was soon on the spot; and amid the uproar, the gentleman got out of the carriage, calling for the police to take up the d—d rascal who had struck his coachman, and interrupted him, a Member of Parliament, while on his way to the House. Great, however, was his astonishment to find his fat coachman crying like a child, and begging ten thousand pardons for having struck his dear young mistress, wishing his hands had been chopped off, and his head too, before he had done such a deed. And so met, for the first time since her marriage, Squire Ingledew and his daughter! As yet the squire had not seen Godfrey, for one or two of the crowd had pushed before him, and he still stood with the reins in his hand, as if unconscious of what he had done; his recognition of the old coachman had fallen like a spell upon him.

Pale and terrified as Emma was, her father was quite startled when he beheld her! It seemed as if the image of his dead wife had risen suddenly before him, with the same sad, beautiful look which he saw a little before her death; and without thinking of what he was doing, he said, "Get into the carriage, love, and I will drive you home—I will not go to the House to-night!"

In that brief interval of time, the feelings of the father had triumphed; he only saw his daughter standing before him—only felt her arms twining

round his neck; he was about to kiss her, when she said, "And my husband! will you not take him also?" Had he grasped a serpent by mistake, he could not have shaken it off more rudely, or more suddenly, than he did his daughter; indeed she must have fallen, had not Godfrey at that moment stood beside her, and caught her in his arms. "No!" was the squire's answer, as he sprang into the carriage, and closed the door to with a savage bang, "not if it would save his life!" And his eyes glared again as he gazed upon Godfrey; while the latter returned his look with a fixed and manly frown, as he stood supporting Emma in his arms, while, husky with anger, he said, "I seek not your help! while we have a crust to share together, we shall live happier than you are, amid all your wealth." More he uttered; but what he said was lost amid the loud rumbling of the wheels as the carriage drove off. The old coachman, with his wig awry, and his face bleeding, turned round on the box, and waved a friendly adieu to Godfrey; for Emma had forgiven him, and his heart felt much lighter, while he vowed within himself that he would never lift up his whip again to human being the longest day he had to live; for Emma had been the very idol of her father's servants.

So they separated, the wealthy squire to take his seat in the House of Commons. But even amid the din of a long debate, he could not altogether avert his thoughts from his daughter. That night, when he returned home to his splendid apartments, he wished she were there with him. He seemed to feel her arms once more about his neck; and when he looked around he saw how lonely he was. He had no relish for the costly wines which were placed before him; the cold chicken and the savoury ham, with all the rich viands that garnished his table, stood untouched, although he had partaken of very little dinner. All he could do was to brood over the past; he felt low-spirited—felt as if something was about to happen, and yet he knew not what. A man had that night called to him as he was leaving the House. He had but just caught a glimpse of the man's face, as it stood revealed by the light of the lamp, when the carriage was driving off. He was half inclined to call out to the coachman to stop; but pride got the mastery over him. He fancied he could remember something of that face! He puzzled his brain for a long time, but all was in vain; and yet he felt certain that it was a face, which once seen, could never be forgotten; and that some time, although he knew not when, he had seen it BEFORE.

After a long time, and by slow degrees, a dim kind of light seemed

to break upon his memory. But it was like the first grey streaks of morning gleaming upon a narrow casement crowded with human faces, which seemed ever to come and go; it was like night and morning playing together—the gray gleam ever and anon giving place to the darkness. At last the confused light seemed to settle down—one face only was seen through the dim window of memory. The dead had gone to their graves again, and it was the face he had that night beheld. He sprang from his seat in an instant! Had an adder stung him, he could not have jumped up with more alacrity, as he exclaimed, "It is he!" and he paced the apartment with hurried and agonizing strides. He seemed to rock and groan like a ship striking upon the sands in a storm, as if every moment it would fall to pieces. "It is he!" exclaimed the squire, unconsciously clenching his hands: then adding, as a new thought broke suddenly upon him, "But what need I fear? He looked poor! It is but parting with a few paltry pounds, and I can spare them now. And yet it is strange that my path should be thus crossed twice in one day. Well! well! I will not yet meet sorrow half-way. If it is to come at all, it will come soon enough! Ah! years ago, and what was I?" added he, striking his forehead with his hand; "in this very room have I stood, and waited upon others. Then it was,—Edward, do this, and do that! Even to-night, when I called my footman Edward in, my own voice seemed to mock me, and I half rose from my chair as if to wait upon myself. But this feeling must be shaken off. I who have been deaf, even to myself, for years, must not now be startled by a shadow. And this very bell," added he, laying hold of the ring, "the summons of which, in former years, I was doomed to obey, to-night seemed to reproach me! Am I yet master? or is this all a dream?" He rang the bell furiously; and when the servant entered to answer the summons, he ordered hot water and the spirit decanters to be brought into the room. Then flung himself into his chair, and said, "It is no dream!—I am still obeyed!"

That night the squire drank deeply; but he quaffed not the cup of forgetfulness! That strange face still haunted him, and with it, the remembrance of other years rose up. The past was again unrolled, and he saw written upon it, as upon a scroll, deeds which made his very heart sink within him. He dozed for a time in his chair, with his head falling back, until he felt well nigh suffocated; and when he unloosed his neckerchief he thought of his daughter, and wished her again with him.

How changed the scene, could he but have beheld his daughter, seated at her homely supper beside her husband, on that very evening, and ever picking out some fine radish from the halfpenny bundle Cinderella had brought in, and offering it to Godfrey! And they were happy amid their poverty, and enjoyed their evening meal of bread and butter and radishes, and sat and smiled together as they drew pictures of the better days that would come; while the squire sat alone, a miserable man, surrounded by his ill-gotten wealth. They talked cheerfully over what they could still part with, until Godfrey's work was completed; how small and how cheap the rooms they could manage to live in, until Emma became so ambitious that she fancied herself in a little house of her own, and had begun to calculate what it would cost to furnish one,—had reached the awful sum of thirty pounds; which included a bed for poor Cinderella, who was to accompany them. Contented Emma! she no longer remembered that she was the squire's daughter! A little cottage was all she then coveted, with just enough to maintain herself, Godfrey, and poor Cinderella.

Their hearts were much lighter that night than they had felt for some time before; for Godfrey had received an unexpected visit from a gentleman who was editor of one of the Annuals, and at his request had undertaken to write a poem or two. 'A guinea was a guinea, then,' and Godfrey had resolved to earn one before he slept. He had not a doubt but that his poem, whatever it might be, would be accepted; he was conscious of his own power. After Emma had retired to rest, he sat up and wrote the following few simple stanzas, which he entitled—

"THE OLD FOUNTAIN.

"Deep in the bosom of a silent wood,
Where an eternal twilight dimly reigns,
A sculptured fountain hath for ages stood
O'erhung with trees; and still such awe remains
Around the spot, that few dare venture there—
The babbling water spreads such superstitious fear.

"It looks so old and grey, with moss besprent,
And carven imagery, grotesque or quaint;
Eagles and lions are with dragons blent,
And cross-winged cherub; while o'er all a Saint
Bends grimly down with frozen blown-back hair,
And on the dancing spray its dead eyes ever stare.

"From out a dolphin's mouth the water leaps
And frets and tumbles to its bed of gloom,
So dark the umbrage under which it sweeps,
Stretching in distance like a dreary tomb;
With murmurs fraught, and many a gibbering sound,
Gurgle, and moan, and hiss, and plash and fitful bound.

"Oh! 'tis a spot where man might sit and weep
His childish griefs and petty cares away;
Wearied Ambition might lie there and sleep,
And hoary Crime in silence kneel to pray.
The fountain's voice, the day-beams faintly given,
Tell of that star-light land we pass in dreams to heaven.

"There lovely forms in elder times were seen,
And snowy kirtles waved between the trees;
And light feet swept along the velvet green,
While the rude anthem rose upon the breeze,
When round the margin England's early daughters
Worshipped the rough-hewn Saint that yet bends o'er the waters.

"And some bent priest, whose locks were white as snow,
Would raise his trembling hands and voice to pray;
All would be hushed save that old fountain's flow,
That rolling bore the echoes far away;
Perchance a dove, amid the foliage dim,
Might raise a coo, then pause to list their parting hymn.

"That old grey abbey lies in ruins now,—
The wild-flowers wave where swung its pond'rous door:
Where once the altar rose, rank nettles grow,
The anthem's solemn sound is heard no more;
'Tis as if Time had lain down to repose,
Drowsed by the fountain's voice which through the forest flows."

Next morning he sent the verses off, addressed to the editor of the Annual. They were gladly accepted; and the guinea paid down, and an order given for Godfrey to furnish other poems at his leisure. That night our hero was so extravagant, he ordered two mutton-chops for supper, and, with the help of Emma, drank a whole pint bottle of 'pale ale;' and not content with this, he sent Cinderella out after supper for a real Havannah cigar.

"Bless me!" exclaimed the fat landlady, when the poor girl told her what she was going for, "I must be a little more civil if it's come to this!—Marry come up! I wonder what they'll be at next!—a bottle of wine I suppose! or perhaps something more desperate!"

The brutal gin-drinking landlady, hated Emma, because she taught her to 'keep her place.' She would neither accept her invitations to tea, nor yet listen to her slanderous gossip. Emma went in and out, with just that cold, provoking civility, which is ten times more cutting to a 'low-bred,' brutal woman, than any 'blow-up' she could receive. Self only prevailed, and assuaged the storm; while they paid, she dared not grumble! and she sometimes rubbed her great, coarse, red hands in delight, as she thought of their being a day behind-hand with their rent; and exclaimed to herself, "Wouldn't I give it that proud, stuck-up madam! Oh! wouldn't I let her hear the length of my tongue!"

But our story again carries us to Gregory Gruff and his WIFE.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MRS. GRUFF AND HER HUSBAND EXCHANGE 'A WORD OR TWO OF A SORT.'—GREGORY IS BIG WITH WRATH, AND HIS WIFE BIG WITH MISCHIEF.

GRUFF recovered, and shortly after married the widow, although he had some thoughts of offering her a small annuity, and 'edging out' of his promise; but he never could muster up resolution enough to do so, he was afraid it might wound her feelings, and he was naturally too kind-hearted to give pain to a woman, especially to one who had waited upon him like widow Clarkson.

The honeymoon was of short duration—a few 'my loves!' and 'my dears!' were exchanged between them for the first few weeks, and after this Gruff began to glide again into his old habits, as if he expected things to go on just as they had done before marriage.

But widow Clarkson was now Mrs. Gruff!—Gregory was no longer her lodger, but her husband; and if he was master she was mistress. Mrs. Gruff knew well enough that her 'work was cut out;' that it would be no easy matter to gain the ascendancy over Gregory:—to break down his old habits, and make him just what she would wish him to be; but she was not to be daunted by trifles, for she had seen out three husbands; though she confessed within herself, that she should find Gruff a 'tough one!'

It was but little more than a month after their marriage, when Mrs. Gruff commenced the siege. They were seated at the breakfast-table; she had poured out her husband's tea, put in the sugar and cream, and made it just to his taste. Before she handed it to him, she watched his countenance; and although he smiled as he received it from her hand, she well knew that the storm would soon burst forth, and she was prepared for it. Gregory took but one sip—spirted it on the fire; threw the cupfull after the first mouthful, raising such a cloud as spoilt the toast, and took all the beauty off the fire-irons. Then uttering one of his sharp brief oaths, he said, "This is black tea."

"Not all black, my dear," answered the widow, her countenance scarcely undergoing a change; "but it is mixed. I began to be tired of all green, my love, and thought you might not dislike the change. Mary," calling to the new servant, "make some fresh toast; and then take the fire-irons away, and wipe them. And make your master a cup of green tea in another pot. I forgot at the moment, my dear, that you had so strong a dislike to black tea."

Gregory was foiled, but not beaten; she spoke so kindly to him that he had no excuse for kicking the table over, although at first he had a great inclination to do so. And she made him some fresh tea, and handed it over with the same sweet smile, just as if nothing had happened.

Gruff finished his breakfast, and went out as usual, but he had scarcely closed the door before his affectionate wife said, "I'll make him remember this before I've done with him, that I will."

And she rubbed down the hobs with her own hands, and swept up the dust and smother which her dear husband had made; laying on harder at every stroke, and internally vowing vengeance.

Dinner-time at length came, and with it Gruff. He paused a moment on the threshold, as if he could scarcely credit his senses—there was a smell of roast meat. But he remembered they had got a new servant—the old one had been discharged for cooking chops whilst Gregory was in the house; for he had insisted that meat should only be dressed during his absence, as he never ate it himself, neither could he abide the smell of it; and before marriage Mrs. Gruff had seconded his commands. Gregory sat down, and the customary bread-pudding was placed before him. The raspberry-vinegar, sugar, and butter—not occupying the centre of the table as usual—but set, as if only for himself. Presently two other dishes appeared, and were placed before Mrs. Gruff; and when the covers were removed, to the

horror of Gregory, they displayed a roasted leg-of-lamb and asparagus. After staring a moment, in mute astonishment, Gruff sprang from his seat, and striking his knife through the centre of the pudding with such force, that he broke the dish, he exclaimed, in a voice of thunder, "Mrs. Gruff, this is an insult I cannot brook!"

"What's the matter, my dear?" said his sweet wife, helping herself to a middle cut as she spoke. "Who is it that's insulted you, my love?—Mary," raising her voice, and calling to the servant, "bring another dish for the pudding; your master's had a misfortune again!—I heard, my dear, of your taking a little lamb on the day Godfrey Malvern was elected, and thought you would have no objection to partake of a little with me."

"I took it on my plate to oblige Parson Preedom," replied Godfrey; "but I never even so much as tasted it. You know I cannot bear the smell of meat; and you discharged your old servant for cooking it whilst I was in the house."

"I did, my dear," answered his loving wife; "but a married woman requires more support than she did while single, and I've refrained from eating meat to oblige you, my love, until I feel quite ill; and I know, dear, that you would not wish me to deprive myself of any little comforts I may require."

"I am hot," said Gregory, puffing like a grampus; for his anger had at last fairly heated him. "Mary, throw open the window, I can scarcely breathe!"

"Mary, let the window alone!" said Mrs. Gruff. "You know," my dear, that the least draught gives me cold," added she, attempting to cough, "and lamb soon sets. Shall I help you to a little, love? I'm sure you'll like it, its so very tender!"

"I'm sure I sha'n't!" answered Gregory, arising from his chair, and walking up and down the parlour. "I knew,—I foresaw it all!—fool that I was! I'll tell you what it is, ma'am! you've deceived me!—taken me in—affected likes and dislikes, only to blind me; and—"

"Hush! my dear," replied Mrs. Gruff; "and don't be angry. Remember, my love, that you cannot speak ill of your lawful wife, without disgracing yourself."

"I'll be divorced!—I'll allow you a separate maintenance!" exclaimed Gregory.

"I need a better than I have had of late!" retorted his loving wife; "a married woman cannot always live on vegetables!"

"Before I married you," shouted Gregory, "I took you for—"

"A fool!" chimed in his sweet rib; "and now you've found your mistake out. I would never trust to my horoscope again, were I you! I did give way to your tom-foolery until I was well nigh famished. But marrying brings people to their senses!"

"What! mock me to my face?" exclaimed Gregory, now sweating again with passion. "By G—, madam, if you say much more, I'll open the window, and throw your dinner into the street!"

"I dare say some poor body would pick it up, and be thankful for it," replied Mrs. Gruff; "and there's plenty more at the butcher's!"

"I'll not live with you!" said Gregory; "I'll leave you! I'll go where I shall never be troubled with you again."

"I'll follow you, if it be to the world's end," rejoined Mrs. Gruff. "I dare say you've got some one you want to be off to; but I'll ferret her out, if she is to be found!"

"I'm deceived! cheated! maddened!" exclaimed Gregory, taking up the leg of lamb, dish and all, and banging it on the floor.

"You're an unreasonable old fool!" answered Mrs. Gruff, seizing the dish which contained the vegetables, and following the example her husband had set her, by smashing it to atoms! "Now go on again! and I'll keep pace with you while there's a pot left in the house!"

"I'll go live at the parson's!" said Gregory; "I'll never enter your house again!"

"I'll come too!" answered his wife; "If he takes you in, he shall me, or I'll bring an action against him for harbouring my husband!"

"I'll start off for London by the next coach!" exclaimed Gregory.

"I'll come by the one following!" retorted his affectionate wife; "and put you in the 'Hue and Cry,' if I cannot find you without."

"I wish the Devil had me!" said Gregory, sitting down and wiping the perspiration from his forehead.

"I wish he had, with all my heart!" responded his loving wife, fanning herself with her handkerchief; "and he would have had you before this, if I hadn't waited upon you day and night; and been the means of saving your life!"

"You're a hypocrite! — a Jezebel!" shouted Gruff; "whoever thought, when you stood whining by my bed-side, you would have turned out what you have!"

"Call me by my right name, if you please!" said his wife. "My name's Margaret—at your service, sir!"

"And a pretty mar, and regret, you've been!—the Devil doubt you!" said Gregory. "You've killed three husbands, with your infer-

nal temper, and no doubt calculate upon adding me to the list; but you'll find me a tough one, madam!"

"Oh! you wretch!" screamed Mrs. Gruff. "The worst of them was too good to stand in your shoes! I never felt their loss until I had you! I had only to wish and have, whatever I wanted. They all adored me but you!—you brute! They would have given me gold, if I could have eaten it. They knew my value!—Mary! Mary! help me up-stairs! Oh! oh! oh! to cast reflections on the dear departed! Mary! my smelling bottle!" And Mrs. Gruff fainted to perfection—she did it beautifully; and Mary comforted her at every step, as she helped her up-stairs.

"And this is the fruits of marrying a widow!" said Gregory, when left to himself. "And I have been fool enough to marry three in one! I might as well have had three wives at once; she will ever be drawing comparisons from one or the other, to me. Why did I not think of these odds before? I have a whole trio to compete with! She says the drunken husband always let her have her own way; that I shall never do! so there I am a loser. The idle one, who was not worth a penny, has this saving clause,—'he never gave her an angry word in all his life; and if he would but have worked, was as good a hearted creature as ever lived.' I shall come off with a worse character than this poor fellow, who got through all her little property, and left her, at his death, penniless. Her first husband, she says, 'worshipped the very ground she trod upon, although never a day passed over without a quarrel.' This is the only chance I have, for she is but a woman after all; and why should I cross her? I must take to reading Epictetus, and practising the key-bugle; when she is noisy, I will study philosophy; and when silent and sullen, treat her with a little music. I will order my next shoes to be heavily nailed; and while she clamours, stamp upon the floor, and swear my feet are cold, and—Mary, how's your mistress?" said he, stopping short suddenly as he saw the servant again enter the room.

"Oh! she'll die if you don't go up-stairs, and speak a word of comfort to her!" answered Mary, holding her handkerchief before her eyes. "Poor dear lady! she takes it so to heart."

"Well! well! I'll come directly," replied Gruff; "and Mary go see what she would like for dinner.—She is but a woman!"

Mary did as she was ordered; and was soon after engaged in the kitchen cooking a very thick mutton-chop, while Gregory picked up the remains of the broken dishes in the parlour. And so Mrs. Gruff

won the day. And here we would back fainting against fighting, five to one, and advise either maid, wife, or widow, never to battle with any other weapon. It beats blushing, hollow; indeed blushing is so difficult to attain, that no art can approach it: it is the gift of nature. While a fainting-fit, if well studied before put into practice, is sometimes far more effective. Our quondam widow could do it to perfection; she knew the very fall of the arm—the stretch of foot necessary for the purpose; and as for the upturned eye, she never had an equal. Indeed one of her most striking attitudes was when she fainted: she had trained Mary to it beforehand; and her only disappointment was, that Gregory Gruff had not been struck by its beauty, for she had said to Mary, "If he upsets the table, run in immediately, and support me, for I intend to faint away."

Mary answered, "Yes, ma'am!" and had placed the smelling-bottle in readiness.

How they made matters up afterwards, may be easily imagined, for Mrs. Gruff had had some experience in such affairs. The more Gregory 'my loved' and 'my deared' her, the more she wept. After the lapse of a few more weeks, she said she was in that state which required different support. Gruff thought this strange, as they had scarcely been married three months.

"I must have a little mutton now and then," sobbed Mrs. Gruff.

"You shall, my dear!" echoed Gregory.

"And a chop to breakfast, and a little relish for luncheon; and I cannot sleep well unless I have made a hearty supper, for I believe I am ——" and she whispered so low, and looked so lovingly, that Gregory said, "I must begin to think about its Nativity; I will have it cast before the child is born."

Then they had a long and playful conversation about what name the child should bear; and they ran through almost every letter in the alphabet. Gruff stuck to the Astrologers, and ransacked the Chaldaic, for he was for the stars. His wife, however, had no such notions; she was for a good long name, with plenty of letters in it: neither Bob, Dick, Tom, Sal, Bet, Nance, nor Moll, pleased her. She thought if it was a girl, Shady-Bower Gruff would be a good and new name;—if a boy, Wellington Napoleon Nelson Gruff, would have a grand, warlike, and imposing sound, and frighten the boys if they ever attempted to fight him. In a word, she wanted something that either smacked of the cottage or the cannon, something rural, or rough. And she made such faces while talking, and clapped her hand to her side so often,

that Gregory thought he should have to send for either the devil or the doctor, before he had been married three months; and that, come whatever might, it gave fair promise of being a 'remarkable child.'

So Gregory gave in, and allowed her to have whatever she chose,—either pork, or porter, chops, or champagne, beef, or brandy. And Mrs. Gruff kissed him, and called him a kind creature, and said that she must not take too much exercise—as it was considered very injurious to a woman in her situation—she already aimed at a carriage. Then Gregory would retire to his study, and turn over his works on Astrology, and exclaim to himself, "The young dog promises well; he will be the wonder of this age! My horoscope tells me that it will be a boy; and I will call him Galileo Godfrey Gregory Gruff, though I am afraid the name is too short for my wife." Mrs. Gruff meantime, was laughing to Mary, and saying "They shall be twins before I'll be beaten:—let my gown out to-morrow, Mary. I'll make him remember upsetting the dinner,—that I will! I've had three husbands, and never was beaten by one of them yet."

CHAPTER XXIV.

HOW MRS. GRUFF BEGAN TO LONG FOR VERY STRANGE THINGS, AND GREGORY GOT PERPLEXED AMONGST THE PLANETS—A STRANGE CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS.

Mrs. Gruff had, at last, hit upon the right method to conquer Gregory; for he was so busied in looking over Nativities, and consulting the positions of the planets, that he had very little time left to thwart her wishes. Gregory had, in his own mind, decided upon the month when the birth of this great prodigy was to take place; he then attempted to fix the week, and at length, the very day. Thus Gruff's time was now principally passed amongst his books; for he had no end of old literary lumber—treatises on Astrology, illustrated with good and evil aspects, where the whole twelve houses were turned topsy-turvy by one, and put to rights by another, just as each author chose to work out his system of moon-struck madness. Mrs. Gruff was not long in discovering that she had somewhat overshot her mark—that her dear husband was far too happy for her, now that he was mounted

on his favourite hobby; and as she had admitted her new servant, Mary, into her full confidence, these two worthies soon began to lay their heads together, and devise fresh measures to deprive Gruff of his solitary pleasure.

"He must not, nor shall not spend so much time alone," said Mrs. Gruff one morning to Mary; "and yet, whatever to hit upon to draw his attention from off those trumpery books, I don't know. I asked the doctor the other day, to recommend travelling for the benefit of my health; but he looked at me, as if to say, 'You ail nothing!' neither do I; but I think people who can afford to pay for it, have a right to fancy they are unwell, whether they are or not. But I'll have a doctor who shall say as I say, and think as I think, or I'll know why."

"So I would if I were you," answered Mary; "people in your state, ma'am, ought to have every thing they long for, and it sometimes turns out very dangerous if they have not. I once lived with a lady who longed for tobacco pipes, although she couldn't bear any one to smoke; and through her longing, she broke her husband off smoking; for whenever he had a pipe in his mouth, she could never rest until she had broken it."

Mrs. Gruff listened attentively; and having sat for several moments in silence, at length said, "That is not a bad thought, Mary; I've long since wanted several things which he has been unwilling to let me have; I'll long for them at once, and if I cannot have them, then I'll turn delirious."

"That's the only plan to get what you want, ma'am," rejoined Mary; "and the best way to begin is, by losing your appetite—I mean when Mr. Gruff 's by. I've lived with one or two ladies, who never could do any thing at all with their husbands until they took to longing: then they had it all their own way. And it wouldn't be amiss, ma'am, to seem always very poorly when Mr. Gruff 's present, then be yourself again as soon as he's gone, and begin to eat whatever you can fancy."

"I'll begin to-day at dinner, Mary!" said Mrs. Gruff; "set out the cold fowl and ham, and I'll make a hearty luncheon; then I can do very well until an hour or so after dinner. I'll long for a carriage, and a pair of grey horses first, with two servants in scarlet livery."

"You'd better not long for so much at once, ma'am," replied Mary; "were I you, I would fancy some strange thing or other to eat first. Mrs. Cunliff longed for the leather of the bellows. Then, after a

time, I would long for a footman in scarlet livery, and so on to a grey pony; then you may get the coachman and carriage, and pair of greys, by degrees."

"But I mean to be delirious as well," said Mrs. Gruff, "and to talk of a night, as if I raved about these things in my sleep: I intend to lie down for a few hours in the day-time, so that I may keep awake at night. And if I cannot get what I want through longing, being delirious, and talking about it in my sleep, why I'll take to my bed and be ill, and see what that will do. Surely he must have some feeling in him."

So matters were arranged; and to give greater effect to the scene, a roast duck was put down for dinner—a dish which Mrs. Gruff preferred to any other. "It will look well, ma'am, to leave the duck untouched," said Mary, "because master knows how very fond you are of it."

"It will be a great trial to leave it untasted," replied Mrs. Gruff; "but I'll try; so give me my aromatic vinegar to take the smell off; and keep the duck hot, Mary, after you have taken it away."

Gregory's planet did not foretel him what was about to transpire —such things were undreamed of in his philosophy; and when he laid aside his works on astrology, and obeyed the summons for dinner, wonderful as were the discoveries he had that morning made in the twelve houses, they fell far short of what he had yet to find out in his own. Indeed, he had been too busily employed amongst the heavenly bodies, to turn his thoughts to earthly objects; for what with numbering the figures on the horoscope, making calculations of good minutes, best seconds, and better scruples, he had got so entangled between Capricorn and Gemini, so crossed among ominous aspects, and propitious influences, that he was at last lost among planetary perplexities, and had more than once consigned the twelve signs to Sathanas himself, and wished from his heart, that the Devil had Omar, Alchabitius, Hali, Zoroastres, Hiarcha, Albenezra, and the whole tribe of cabalists and astrologers. "It is strange! very strange!" muttered Gregory, as he closed his books before coming down to dinner.—"If he escapes drowning, there stand the gallows gaping for him; should he miss hanging, there is fire to be guarded against. If he is born at one o'clock, he will break his neck; if at two, turn out a terrible thief; if at three, probably murder me; at four, sure to be hung; at five, drowned; at six, be burnt to death; at seven, shoot himself; at eight, be a spendthrift; at nine, a drunkard. Come when he may,

the planets are all against him for this year; there is not one propitious aspect in his favour, and I hope the young dog will put off his coming until a more favourable opportunity; such things have been done, and I'll talk to Mrs. Gruff about it." So saying, he left his study, and came down to dinner, where he beheld Mrs. Gruff sitting like the

"Poor soul who sat sighing under the sycamore tree,
With her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,
Singing O willow, willow!"

Not that Mrs. Gruff sang at all; but there were divers and sundry twitches about her mouth, which made Gregory augur strange things; for although he had heard that a first child was at times born somewhat full early, yet he thought that one at the end of only three months would, indeed, be a marvel.

"Art thou not well, my dear?" said Gregory, speaking in an unusually kind manner, as he approached and took her hand.

"Not very well, my love," answered Mrs. Gruff, turning up her large expressive eyes, and looking unutterable things at Gregory.

"I'm sorry for it, very sorry," replied Gregory, sitting down to his customary bread-pudding. Then, looking across the table, he said, "Shall I carve the duck for you, my dear?"

"No, thank you, my love!" answered the affectionate wife, smelling of her aromatic vinegar; then ordering Mary to take away the duck, as she exclaimed, "the smell of it quite overpowers me! I don't know whatever's come over me of late."

"The devil! my love. What! not taste the duck?" exclaimed Gregory, laying down his knife and fork in astonishment. "You must be very bad indeed! Shall I run out and call in the doctor?"

Mrs. Gruff shook her head and sighed, and said, "No, my dear!" Then commenced biting at a large lump of chalk!

"I think Missis is longing, sir!" said Mary, who had long since taken the liberty to speak whenever she thought she would; "and I told her to-day, that to eat so much chalk would do her a great injury; and that——"

"Chalk! chalk!" echoed Gregory; "why the child will be like a plaster-image of Samuel praying, an ornament only fit for the mantel-piece. Longing! what can it be that she longs for?"

"That's what I've been asking her to tell me all the morning, sir," answered Mary; "but she only shakes her head, and keeps on eating at the chalk. I hope she won't be like Mrs. Cross, who longed to sit

on the cinder-heap, and champ cinders all day long; nor like Mrs. Rose, who longed for a pail of white-wash, and fed herself with the brush; or Mrs. Turner, who could fancy nothing but rolls treacled with tar; and when the child was born, it was just as black as Mrs. Rose's was white. Women in Missis's state do sometimes long for strange things. I knew one lady who could only take her breakfast out of an old blacking-bottle, and another that used to eat candle-ends; but the worst of them all was Mrs. Brougham, for she used to eat up all the besoms; and I've heard of another that took a fancy to dine off her husband, and actually bit his nose; but she must have been a cannibal!"

"Dine off her husband!" exclaimed Gregory, springing back a full foot from the table. "Good Heavens! Mary, I have read of one of the old heathen goddesses eating up her own children, but never of devouring her husband. What is it you long for, in the Devil's name? do tell me, Mrs. Gruff, and you shall have it at once!"

Mrs. Gruff arose from her seat with the intention of kissing Gregory, and then following up the embrace by her intended request; but whether there was anything of the cannibal in her countenance, or Gruff remembering that she had had no dinner, and thinking that she might mean to make a meal of him,—or whatever other crotchet he might at the moment have in his head, he sprang up and ran to the other side of the table, and looking across it said, "Whatever you long for, Mrs. Gruff, you shall have; but for Heaven's sake do not come too near me! Mary's younger than I am: if you mean biting, begin with her first!"

Mrs. Gruff snapped her teeth together like a dog snatching at a fly; then said, "I long for a pair of grey horses, and two servants in scarlet liveries; and I must have them."

Gregory's eyes widened to their full stare of astonishment. He had read of giants, and gnomes, and wicked elfs, who made hearty meals of poor mortals, but never of one who longed to devour at a meal a pair of horses and a couple of men; and when he had somewhat recovered from his astonishment he exclaimed, "Why, Mrs. Gruff, you are mad! stark staring mad!"

"I must have them, or something else," said Mrs. Gruff, giving another snap, and following up her husband, who ran to the other side of the table. "If I have not, the child will be marked all over with horses and carriages; and have a coachman on one cheek, and a footman on the other. I long for them, and must have them!" and she ran after Gregory with an intent to kiss him; but he thought she meant

biting; so he hurried off up stairs, and turning the key of his study, shut himself up safely amongst his horoscopes.

He then threw himself into his chair, saying, "He'll be another Hercules!—she'll long for live lions next! Two men, and two horses—what an unnatural appetite! And yet the mother of the Trojan warrior Hector, longed for rattle-snakes and spear-heads, and they did her no harm. He will be a wonderful child,—the marvel of the age! and fill up the blank space between Jupiter and Sol! although it is hedged in by threatening angles and ominous conjunctions. Well, there is still a trine and sextile in his favour, and the centaur must signify the horses—she must have them! The army of Napoleon found them tolerable eating when they retreated from Moscow; but the coachman,—I must look into the work again, and see if they were eaten also! What was done during a savage warfare cannot, however, be tolerated in a peaceable civilized country. This appetite must be conquered, or the woman will be hung!"

While Gregory was thus communing with himself above stairs, Mrs. Gruff and Mary were laughing heartily below.

"I did think," said Mary, "you would have longed for a cucumber, as they are not yet in season, and I am very fond of them; and one would have been a nice relish to the cold meat that was left yesterday."

"A cucumber, Mary!" said Mrs. Gruff, "why he would have got me one from Squire Sutton's hot-house in a few minutes. I shall get what I long for, trust me!—and that's a coach, and a pair of long-tailed grey horses. It's no use making two bites at a cherry, and he can afford it."

"You know best, ma'am," answered Mary; "but it's worse than Mrs. Brougham longing for the besoms."

"Never mind Mrs. Brougham, Mary," said Mrs. Gruff. "I hope you have kept the duck hot; I long for the wing and the breast in earnest. Poor fellow! he's had but very little dinner. You shall go up soon, and see if he would like a little gruel. I mean to lie down for an hour or two after dinner, to be ready for night."

So Mary reached out the duck.

CHAPTER XXV.

SQUIRE INGLEDEW MEETS WITH A VERY OLD FRIEND, SHAKES HIS HAND, AND WISHES FROM HIS HEART THE DEVIL HAD HIM; BUT NEVERTHELESS INVITES HIM HOME,—IN WHICH THE READER SEES THROUGH "A GLASS DARKENED."

LEAVING Gregory Gruff and his wife, for a time, to settle matters in the best way they can; and Godfrey Malvern to labour on, in the hope that brighter days will dawn upon him, we must now turn the reader's attention to Squire Ingledew, M.P. for the borough of Buttervote.—The squire had thought more about his daughter of late than he had ever before done since her marriage with Godfrey; but she had never once written to him since their interview in Parliament-street, so he concluded that the pride of her husband prevented her from making any further application to him, and that when they were plunged a little deeper into poverty, he should be sure to hear from her; and then he doubted not but that she would be willing enough to leave her husband; for, from his heart, the squire hated him. But the thoughts of his daughter did not wholly occupy his mind; her image came and went while he brooded over more gloomy matters, and probably would never have crossed his mental vision at all, had it not been that he thought her presence might have aided in chasing away these darker and more painful remembrances;—that if he had her to sing and play to him, as she once did, his mind would not be haunted so much by that FACE, which had so suddenly appeared before him, and which he never recalled without feeling a strange sickening about the heart, an aching sensation, that depressed his spirits, broke his slumbers, and ate him up with melancholy. He seemed like a man who, having gained some dangerous eminence, stands so long enwrapt in admiration of the prospect from the summit, that he hears not his companion glide away, who had climbed with him step by step, and who in his descent, cuts away every jutting fragment by which they had ascended, and then stands grinning at him in safety from below. Night after night had he watched for THAT MAN; had ordered his carriage to wait at the corner of Bridge-street,—as high up as Whitehall,—and at last at Charing-cross; to each of which places he had walked alone, in the hopes of confronting that unwelcome stranger.

"I will know the worst!" muttered the squire, as he left the House of Commons one night; "this uncertainty tortures me worse than the agonies which the damned are doomed to endure!"

Another night came; and although the rain thundered down in torrents, and Parliament-street was almost deserted, (for it was past midnight,) still the squire ventured forth alone to where he had ordered his carriage to be in waiting, near Charing-cross. Moody and silent did he move along, almost unconscious of the rain, although the wind blew full in his face, and he was wet through up to his chest, until he at length reached the arched gateway of Scotland-yard, when he lowered his umbrella, and seeing a man stand there for shelter, said, "Call up the carriage standing at the opposite corner, and I will give you a shilling."

"Call it yourself, and be d—d!" replied the stranger; "you are as able to walk home as I am! Nay, bristle not up, Ned! You know me now!" The man came forth into the full glare of the gas-lamp as he spoke; and Squire Ingledew turned pale as death, while he looked at him.

"You thought I was dead before this!" continued the stranger; "did you not? No such luck, Ned! I have escaped the jail, cheated the gallows, and am here still, although you seem not glad to see me."

"And pray what is your business with me, fellow?" said the squire, at length recovering his self-possession, yet looking cautiously round as he spoke; then adding, in a less-dignified tone, "You must be mistaken in the person!"

"Devil a bit, Ned!" answered the man bluntly; "I should as soon take the dome of St. Paul's for the Monument, as mistake you! You would not like me to recall every incident since first we became acquainted, would you Ned?" added the man, with a bitter sneer. "You cannot have forgotten your Old Right Hand, as you used to call me, in those old familiar times!"

"Good Heavens! is it Hopkins?" exclaimed the squire, so far mastering his feelings for the moment, as to hold out his hand; although if there had been a dagger in it, and the place of their meeting had been some lonely and unfrequented path, he would almost have been tempted to have plunged it into Hopkins' heart.

"Hey! hey! Hopkins, and Dixon, and Smith, and many another alias, that have done you good service in their day!" answered the man, shaking the proffered hand, although he scarcely retained it for a moment. "I thought you could not have forgotten your Old Right Hand, that has done everything but murder for you!"

"Hush! hush! my dear old friend! speak lower!" said the squire; for he heard footsteps approaching. The solitary policeman paused a moment, and held up his lanthorn; and when the squire requested him to call up the carriage which stood nearly opposite, he touched his hat, and answered, "Yes, sir," instead of ordering them to move on, although they were, beyond doubt, two of the greatest scoundrels he would that night pass on his beat. But even the wise world is taken in by appearances; and the sound of "my carriage," has ere now stifled the suspicions of more penetrating people than policemen.

"What can I do for you?" enquired the squire. "It does not look well to stand here talking, at this hour! Your appearance —— I mean, you are not so well-dressed—but that you might ——"

"Be taken for a thief, Ned!—I understand you!" answered Hopkins, his dark, forbidding brow lowering ominously; while a deep-meaning shot from the sudden glare of his eye, as he added, "and the company in which I am found be thought no better than myself.—Well! well! it is an uncharitable world; but I am familiar with its buffetings. You had better take me home in your carriage, Ned, bring out a bottle of your oldest wine, and while I smoke my cigar, we will talk over old times. You can tell me all you have won, while I recount all I have lost,—how you became rich, while I became poor —— But here comes the cursed carriage!"

"Not to-night! not to-night!" replied Squire Ingledew, again extending his hand. "Here is money for you; and here is my address, B——y-square. Come to-morrow; and come in a more becoming dress. Mr. Metcalf,—remember and announce yourself as Mr. Metcalf. I will make a memorandum of the name."

"Come, this is as it ought to be, Ned!" answered Hopkins, thrusting the bank-notes into his pocket, without once thanking the squire. "I thought you were too wise a man to give me the cold-shoulder, after what has taken place between us. Though d—n me, Ned, I should have liked it all the better, if you had taken to me at first sight, as they say; but no matter!"

"Upon my honour! I did not know you, at first!" said the squire, whom a lie would not choke at any time; "you are so much altered. But I must beg of you not to use so familiar a phrase as Ned; it lessens a man in the eyes of his servants: between ourselves, you know it is all very well. But—I shall see you to-morrow. Good-bye, and God bless you."

"As sure as you will see the Devil, some day or another, if you

meet with your due!" muttered the man to himself, as the carriage drove off. Then calling to the policeman who had ordered up the squire's carriage and made his best bow for the shilling he had received, he said, "Order me a cab, and I will give you half-a-crown; I can afford to out-gentleman the gentlemanly fellow who has just driven off, although he keeps his own carriage."

The policeman made as low a bow to Hopkins as he had done to the squire, and hoped that it would rain again when he was on duty.

"Now drive me to Lock's-fields, as if the devil was at your heels," said Hopkins to the cabman; "and here is a good crown-piece for your fare; we are all in luck's way to-night!"

The policeman laughed, and the cabman drove off at full gallop.

We have in a former chapter described the abode of John Hopkins; for it was the same man who had so dishonestly become the possessor of the funds Gregory Gruff intended for Godfrey Malvern, that had haunted the dreams of Squire Ingledew. And now he had all at once become comparatively rich; and that same Providence, which suffereth not a 'sparrow to fall to the ground' unheeded, had ordained that his wife should appropriate his ill-gotten wealth to a good purpose. For Hopkins had told so plausible a story, that she, unsuspicious as a child, at last believed her husband had came by his money honestly.

The next morning Hopkins went out early into the New-Cut, and purchased himself a second-hand suit of clothes, which had once been black, and by some mysterious preparation had again assumed something of their former hue, though now coloured to hang up and make a show, being much better to sell than wear. About noon he reached the squire's residence, and thundered as loudly at the door as the smartest lacquey that ever announced a title more important than the person ushered in. "I will not be behind-hand with the proud upstart!" thought Hopkins to himself, as he took his hand from the knocker, and glanced at his shoes, one of which was tied with tape, now no longer black. The liveried-servant opened the door just wide enough to show himself, and was about to close it again as Hopkins hesitated to give in his name, for he had forgotten the one the squire wished him to make use of, when Ingledew, who had long been watching from the window, came up, just in time to prevent any altercation.

With many a "happy to see you," and so forth, the squire led the way upstairs into his private room, when, handing Mr. Hopkins a chair, he rang the bell, and ordered the servant to bring in luncheon.

He then commenced talking about every-day topics, and was running on in his usual off-handed manner, the servant having left the room, when he was all at once cut short by his visitor saying, "These matters concern not me, Ned! I have come to know how you crept so snugly into the estate of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, without calling upon me?—the only living witness to the old man's will!"

Although Squire Ingledew was well aware that he had to deal with a daring and desperate man, yet he was wholly unprepared to answer the bold and unqualified question so unceremoniously put to him. He had hoped that the splendour of the apartments, through which he had purposely led his unwelcome visitor, would in some measure have overawed him; but in this he was mistaken. Hopkins was the same unbending fearless fellow who had bearded him on the previous night. He scowled at the squire when he had done speaking; then, unbidden, took up the decanter and drank several glasses of wine, before he again replaced it on the table; adding, when he was satisfied, "And this, I dare say, Ned, has been your common drink for years; while I, many a time, have not known how to raise a glass of gin. What a cursed shame!"

"The questions you have put to me are readily answered," said the squire, after a long pause. "The son died, and no other heir could be found; at least none in a direct line! The nearest of kin consented that the estate should be sold, and I became the purchaser."

"The son died!—where?—when?" inquired Hopkins; "he was alive four years ago! And his mother! what became of her? You have not told me the truth, Ned;—I know you!"

"Villain! will you give me the lie to my face?" exclaimed the squire, springing up from his chair; his voice, however, but ill according with the action, although he had 'screwed his courage to the sticking-place!'

"You know you lie!" replied Hopkins, apparently unmoved. "I know you lie! Were there but a shadow of truth in what you have said, you would last night have given me into the hands of the policeman! I should now have been in Newgate, in place of where I am. But you know, Ned, you dare not touch me! Come, beat your brain once more. I give you three more trials! and after all you will be compelled to tell me the truth!"

"You are a daring scoundrel! Hopkins," said the squire. "I did make inquiries after you; but heard that you were dead. I have no wish either to quarrel with or turn my back upon an old acquaint-

ance—I have more money than I stand in need of; but I have told you what I believe to be the truth! As to the wife, or the mother, she has never been heard of since she disappeared so suddenly."

"It will not do, Ned, try again!" said Hopkins, once more helping himself to the wine. "Her brother and I were old cronies, whilst he was in London. As to the separation between the old squire and her, it was mutual; and so far she had no claim upon the estate; neither had any of her relations; all this I know. But the boy,—he was alive four years ago; and his uncle, by the mother's side, was with him. Here, read this letter," added he, handing over a dirty and crumpled epistle. "I had several from him at the time, and will make you a present of the one you have in your hand. He thought it wisdom to keep the young squire ignorant of his title until he became of age. He did so, Ned, because he knew you had possession of the estate. Now to business! What will you pay to keep him for ever ignorant? Come, I will, providing you come down handsomely, insure you an undisputed title to the estate of Sutton-cum-Bottesford!"

But the squire was too busied with the perusal of the letter to listen to the conversation of his guest; and after he had finished reading it he laid it down, and said, "There is some knavery in this! How came he to find out the boy was alive?" The last sentence was uttered unconsciously; he had forgotten that any one was present.

"Poverty did it!" replied Hopkins, who had kept his eye rivetted on the squire's countenance. "The old woman could not make the business you set her up in answer. Twenty pounds purchased the secret. Her dead son's name is now rightly entered in the parish-book. She took the money and the oath together, spent it, and eased her conscience; then went into the workhouse, where she is living still. You may see her to-day if you like."

"D——n! and is this the end of all my deeply-laid plans!" exclaimed the squire.

"It is," answered Hopkins, unmoved, "unless you come down handsomely! I have already made something out of your daughter, and must now go shares with you. You have had it all your own way for a good while, Ned. I thought we should understand each other before we separated!"

After some further conversation, Hopkins informed him how he came in possession of the note which Gregory Gruff had given Godfrey Malvern on his banker. The squire was so delighted with the information, so great was his dislike to Godfrey, that he almost forgot how much he

hated his unwelcome visitor; and, before they parted, he gave him a check for an hundred pounds, that being the sum Hopkins said his wife required to furnish a better house, and let off lodgings. So they separated; the squire having agreed to allow Hopkins ten pounds a-month, on condition that he was to remain the undisturbed and undisputed proprietor of Sutton-cum-Bottesford. But we must now return to Godfrey Malvern.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HOW GODFREY MALVERN, AFTER MANY TRIALS, AT LAST FOUND A PUBLISHER, AND AGREED TO WRITE A WORK—A LONG AND TEDIOUS, BUT TRUE CHAPTER.

Godfrey Malvern was by this time so far reduced in circumstances, that he knew not where to obtain a sovereign in the wide world; and Emma's resources were also exhausted, for she had sold numberless things which her husband never knew she possessed, until she only just left herself such a change of articles as were absolutely necessary. Emma, however, possessed that happy temperament, which is never altogether disheartened; for, dark and gloomy as the surrounding realities were, still she could in fancy see far beyond all difficulties, into a land of golden promises, lighted only by hope. She seldom went out without believing that some romantic adventure would befal her; that she should pick up a large sum of money which somebody or other had dropped, and which would relieve them from all present privations. But, alas! the fairy which made such sunshine about her innocent heart, 'gambolled not in her path;' she found impediments enow in her walks, without stumbling over a purse of gold. She bore up against all difficulties much better than her husband, although she had been nursed in the 'downy lap of luxury,' and shed the same sweet smile over their homely board, which she had diffused around her father's sumptuous table in the hall of Sutton-cum-Bottesford: true, her eye had lost something of its former brilliancy, but the light which lurked therein, though now less piercing, was the soft and chastened glance of woman's deeply-tried love. Her gay and happy light-heartedness many a time chased away the furrows from Godfrey's thoughtful

frew, when he would, if left alone, have sat brooding over his trials in silence, until he had become the very image of despair.

One day, while they were walking out together, a carriage drew up close beside the pavement, which they were about to cross; and Emma instantly called her husband's attention to the benevolent-looking old gentleman who occupied it, as she said, "I am sure, Godfrey, if we were to tell that nice-looking old gentleman who we are, he would lend us an hundred pounds or two, until your book was published. I never saw so mild and charitable a countenance in my life. Don't you think he would, now? I have read of such things being done."

"They very often are, my dear, in print," answered Godfrey; "and you may be enabled to guess as to what would be the result of your application, by observing that poor woman, with her two children. See! she has reached the carriage." Emma watched the poor creature approach, and saw the charitable-looking old gentleman shake his head, then draw up the window, and throw himself back in his seat. She sighed, took a penny out of her little silk-bag, gave it the woman, heard her bless her sweet face, and they passed on, while the benevolent old gentleman drove up to a fruiterer's, and purchased half a dozen pine-apples, at a sovereign each; for he was about to give a splendid dinner on the morrow, and had not a sixpence to spare for the poor woman or her children. No! he paid his poor-rates, and that was enough for —— HE WAS COMPELLED.

"You see, my love," said Godfrey, taking hold of her hand as he spoke, while she leant more heavily on his arm, "that all are not so generous as they appear to be. Many a man would pay down his ten pounds towards the erection of a monument to perpetuate the memory of some one, who, when living, he would not have given a shilling to, if it would have saved him from perishing.—Vanity gets more contributors than Charity; not that it lessens the good which is done in the end; but, as Gregory Gruff used to say, if any leading person could make it fashionable to erect marble monuments to murderers, it would be done, providing some respectable churchman would countenance the humbug, and persuade the people that they were reared up as warnings to others. Such virtuous endurance as yours, my dear Emma, would not be enough to draw forth the sympathies of these people; but were I, your loving husband, to sally out, shoot a man, and take his purse on the highway, and very deservedly bring myself to the gallows, I have no doubt but that you

might live like a lady, for years, by only selling locks of my hair, and dealing out my autograph."

It was by such trifling remarks as these, that Godfrey endeavoured to draw out the mind of his beautiful wife, and give her broader and 'correcter' views of the world; and although she sometimes placed her hand playfully over his mouth, and bade him not preach such grave sermons, yet she treasured up and pondered over what he had said, for a great change had already taken place in Godfrey Malvern: the breathing world was now his book; he had begun to study the heart of man. Those who had seen him the petted poet of the borough of Buttervote,—the rhyming schoolmaster of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, would scarcely have recognized him now. The face was the same—a shade more thoughtful; but the manner of the man was altered; he looked firmer, more resolved, more daring! he stood more erect; there was a kind of 'knock-me-down' look in his countenance, which would make even a ruffian quail, and more than once take the measure of his man, before he dared to insult him. Disappointment had done this; it had neither lowered his pride, nor lessened his ambition; it had only made him sterner, harder, more manly, more thoughtful and reserved, and better able to bear the heavy blows which are aimed at the iron breasts of those who come into the world as if only to see how hard their dear brothers and sisters can strike. We have said, that Emma bore with difficulties better than her husband,—she did; but he endured the greater weight: her, they pained only for the moment—him, they preyed and fed upon. An obstacle removed, money in her purse, their table well furnished, and her husband smiling upon her, and she thought not of the future; while he looked far beyond all this; and although his love for her often made him veil his frown with smiles, and appear happy when he really was very sad; yet he did it, because it grieved him to cause her a moment's pain: though the worm was feeding on his heart, he endured the pangs it inflicted, without complaining; she had but to speak, and he remembered *her*, and looked no longer sad.

But in the still midnight, when he sat alone with his head resting on his hand, when his mind wandered from the half-written page, it was then that he thought and felt the most acutely. "There are an hundred other paths in the world," he would argue to himself, "by which I might have secured comfort, if not affluence. There is not a Tompkins, a Smith, or a Jenkinson, who is not happier than I am. They hurry off, and are at their appointed places in the city, by

nine or ten in the morning, and are home again by four or five in the afternoon, and their cares are ended. The future troubles them not; they have no thought for the morrow; the present is provided for. Why am I not like these? Oh, God! why am I different? In the cold grave I can have no selfish design; no mercenary wish, that future generations can gratify. Why then should I wish to be remembered after death, to distinguish myself from those who live so happily and comfortably on earth?—who are free from those pangs and heart-aches which I seek, and bring down upon myself! I know not—I cannot know. Whether the fairies dance upon the grass that they may drive the sweeter flowers underground, and keep to themselves an eternal summer below, leaving the present day in the luxury of rank vegetation, to stand and wonder why a barren circle could exist amid so much plenty, I know not!—the mark is there,—barren! barren! barren! Is it an idle life, to sit brooding day after day, and night after night?—to work hour for hour with the money-getting world until it can keep no longer awake, and then to work on alone, even through many of the hours which that drowsy world sleeps?—No! it is the want of fellowship between earth and Heaven!—the spiritual and the sensual have no affinity."

This was the savage philosophy of disappointment—the damnable dream unrealized—the golden vision ungrasped; the floating atoms of the unsubstantial sunbeam had yet to come—the 'dusty splendour' to be clutched. Want had come without even fame to sweeten it.—Morning came, ushered in by rain, and breakfast; and in place of Apollo, 'ankle-deep in lilies of the vale, with wings of sunlight,' in came the fat, gin-drinking, brutal landlady, for her rent. She had no prologue to deliver, but simply threw open the door, without even so much as knocking; and thrusting in her forbidding countenance, said, "I've come for my rent! it's been due these two days!"

Emma looked at her husband, and was afraid to speak; it was something new to her to be "bullied" for money. Godfrey saw at a glance that the woman was a blackguard; it was branded upon her brow, although he had never examined her countenance so narrowly before; and the abrupt and impudent manner in which she spoke, caused the hot blood to mount his cheek in an instant, as he said, "I would thank you not to enter my apartments in this abrupt manner, again! Your rent is not due until next Wednesday; for it is not my pleasure any longer to pay a week in advance, as I have done."

"Then it's my pleasure that you leave on Wednesday week!" said

the brutal landlady; "I like people to begin as they mean to go on, that come to lodge with me. Some people that I know, think other people no better than dirt under their noses. Marry, come up! to such upstarts, say I, and ——"

"Come, be off!" exclaimed Godfrey, arising from his chair; "or I shall be under the necessity of so far degrading myself, as to take you by the shoulders, and put you out; I will not have your insolence here!"

"Lay a finger upon me, if you dare!" replied the landlady, stepping at the same time outside the door,—for she had had so many quarrels with her lodgers, for some of which she had paid heavily, that she knew she was in the wrong to carry on her "wordy warfare" within the apartment; so she finished what she had to say, on the landing, shouting loud enough to be heard all over the house. "Remember I've given you warning!" continued this limb of the Devil; "and you've got two pairs of sheets, four pillow-cases, six towels, and a coverlet of mine; and I'll have a policeman in before you leave, to see that you give them up. And there 's a white-hafted fork missing, and one of my best silver spoons you have bent, and a hole burnt in the carpet with your cigar ash; all these you shall make good, or I'll have a warrant out against you!" So she ran on; the thunder gradually diminishing as she descended the stairs step by step; when entering the parlour, the first thing she did, was to give Cinderella a smart box on the ear; and after this, she felt a little easier.

"There is but one course to be adopted now," said Godfrey to his wife; "I must endeavour to sell my work before it is finished. Perhaps some publisher may take a fancy to it, and advance me a little money upon the manuscript. I will set out this very morning." And Godfrey began to prepare himself. Emma pleaded hard to accompany him, but he was compelled to refuse her request; for he thought that he might have to travel some distance, and the day had set in wet. Emma was half afraid to stay in the house with the brutal landlady.

Godfrey Malvern well knew that there were great odds against his succeeding, and that he might consider himself very fortunate if he could only obtain a promise that his manuscript would be looked at; still he was determined not to leave 'a stone unturned.'

"For her sake," said Godfrey, "I will do that which my pride recoils at!—she must not know want. I will traverse London through

until I find a purchaser." So he sallied forth, after having kissed Emma, with his manuscript under his arm.

It was a rainy morning, a morning that looks really miserable in London, when omnibuses and cabs fill well, and rattle headlong through the plashy streets, spotting the foot-passengers like leopards. It was on such a morning, when Godfrey threaded his way up Westminster-road, and along Stamford-street, too much occupied with his own thoughts as he passed, to list a moment to the sweet strains which Thirlwall was drawing from his violin, although it 'discoursed most eloquent music.' Moodily he glided over Blackfriars-bridge, and mingled among the crowd of umbrellas that moved to and fro along Ludgate-hill, where cottons and silks rose and fell, according to the stature or temper of the bearers; until at length he gained Paternoster-row, a spot to which many a poor author's prayers have been addressed, when he needed either cash or credit—things which the children of genius are too often in want of.

Every reader who knows London, and has been in Paternoster-row, can readily imagine what a miserable-looking place it must be on a gloomy and rainy morning. Long and narrow, with its lofty houses shutting out almost every ray of sunshine, even in summer; it has in cloudy and wet weather a most melancholy look. A man remembers its name, and repeats his prayers, lest he should be tempted to do something desperate; for there are courts and alleys about it which have a most inviting look to any poor wretch who has thoughts of hanging himself. With but few exceptions the shops have also a miserable look: many of them are closed, the late proprietors having retired—or failed! for publishing, like authorship, is rather a precarious profession;—some few manage to purchase themselves a palace! others a prison! Genius, indeed, is a queer commodity, and England is a mercantile country, where ledgers and day-books find a readier sale than literature. Few of the large houses make any 'show' in their windows; you see the names on the door-posts, and no more. Sometimes the portrait of a parson strikes you in passing; for many of these reverend gentlemen have of late 'countenanced' their own sermons, so that whatever doubt there may be about the portraits of the preachers of olden times, there can be none about those of our own—they stand side by side with their sermons. That morning Godfrey saw a reverend gentleman looking in a window at his own likeness, and smiling at the thought of the many parlours in which he should be 'hung up.'

framed and glazed. He was a distinguished member of that great CATHEDRAL OF CANT in the Strand.

Further on Godfrey saw those little morsels of cheap divinity, which are doled forth on a Sunday to poor dinnerless devils, whose thoughts are too much occupied to obtain bare bread and water in this world, before they can think of the next. Resignation is but sorry comfort for a poor fellow when his wife and children are crying around him for bread—he wants something more substantial than spiritual food! John Williams may be made to talk very well in a printed tract, over his potatoes and salt, of the benefit he derived from a good sermon; but ask John himself, and he will tell you that a lump of bacon would have increased the blessing. Godfrey also saw shops, whose windows have a venerable look, and are filled with goodly old volumes—massy folios such as our forefathers read, which were written by the stern, unbending, honest-hearted, and truly pious pastors of other days. The books look like what they are—bulky pillars of the Church. Blessed be the memories of these authors! they were, indeed, men who dared to call vice by its right name, let it appear in whatever shape it might. They lifted up the lash, and at once struck home! It mattered not to them, whether the culprit was clothed in purple and fine linen, or wore only the beggar's gaberdine. But the great utterance of the Gods can never be forgotten, while those huge dark-bound volumes are in existence. Godfrey saw other shops, which send out their thousands of cheap publications weekly, and which, if superintended rightly, and issued judiciously, would in time do more towards bettering the moral condition of the people than all the laws that were ever passed. A free press is the greatest lever of liberty, and, with a right purchase, may be made to move the world! But let us not forget that no country was ever yet so free that it needed not guarding by discriminating laws.

The great workshops of science, and deeply-dug knowledge, Godfrey wisely shunned, for in those he well knew his manuscripts would be rejected. He knew that the web of a field-spider was beautiful; but whether the little mechanist began to form it in the middle or at the side first, he cared not to know. One bird might have a bone more than another, without disturbing the reflections of Godfrey Malvern; yet no naturalist more admired its beautiful form, or drew greater pleasure from its sweet song than he did; although years might have been spent in examining its structure. Nature to him presented one broad beautiful view, a page of poetry written by the hand of

God Himself!—a work too mighty, and too holy, for him to criticise, much as he admired the perseverance of those who examined it letter by letter, and word by word. Whether a periwinkle battened on the sea-weed, or drew its nourishment from the grey wave-washed stones to which it clung, Godfrey had never inquired; he had had other thoughts while wandering along the shores of the deep unsounded sea—thoughts which, like the waves, came and overwhelmed these lesser though more useful imaginings. For nothing in nature was too minute for his observation, although he dealt only with the poetry of knowledge.

He entered one of the shops after some delay, and inquired if they purchased manuscripts; and received for answer that they did, providing they approved of the work. Godfrey stated what was the nature of his intended publication, and was then told that they were afraid it would not suit. A second only published on commission, and were unwilling to take any risk. A third would willingly incur all the expenses, and divide the profits—if any, after the work had paid. A fourth would look it over, if the author would leave it for a few days. Godfrey wanted money, and could not wait, although he knew that if he got his manuscript read, and returned within a week, he might consider himself highly favoured; and that even to get it looked at at all, generally required some strong recommendation. At length he met with a publisher, who seemed more disposed to listen to him than any one he had hitherto conversed with. He was, indeed, a reader of the Old Monthly Magazine, and had been struck by one or two of the articles which Godfrey informed him he had written in that work. He invited Godfrey Malvern into his private room, and after a long conversation begged to be allowed to look at the manuscript. He read several pages of it before he again spoke, and bade our hero call on the morrow, as he had some friend whose judgment he wished to consult before returning any final answer; kindly adding, "I like the portion which I have read, and although it is not exactly the work I want, I doubt not that we shall be able to come to terms for a volume of a somewhat similar character."

Godfrey left his manuscript. Paternoster-row had no longer a gloomy look—it was the brightest spot he had hitherto found in London. There was a 'civil silence' about it, in admirable keeping with its trade; to him it became all at once classic ground. And such trifling changes affect the very wisest of us more or less in the same

Right happy were Godfrey and Emma that night!—they envied not the queen upon her throne. The next morning, punctual to his appointment, Godfrey was with the publisher. All wore a prosperous look; the style of the work was extolled, the subject praised. But,—oh! those buts,—could he not write something of the same kind, which would instruct as well as amuse. Needs must, when—and so on. So Godfrey consented to try his hand at such a work, as the publisher suggested. The subject was one which he really liked, and he was only required to furnish a few pages as a specimen, and just draw up a brief outline of the whole, previous to the agreement being signed. All this was done before Godfrey slept; and on the following day he dined with the publisher, signed the agreement, which stipulated that he should receive so much per month for each sheet, drew ten pounds in advance, and went home with a lighter heart, and a heavier pocket, than he had carried for many a day. And so our hero sold his work before it was written, as many a popular author still does—nay even before he has decided upon either the subject or the title. But Godfrey was an exception to this almost general rule, for his name was unknown.

Our hero was now certain of receiving ten pounds a-month for a year at least. After all his care, and anxiety, and sacrifice of sleep, he had at length attained the high wages of a respectable mechanic. Was he not then happy at last? No! he was now compelled to write against time for bread. His great ambitious work was thrown aside, and he must produce his two sheets monthly before he could demand his ten pounds. But the publisher was a gentle task-master, and Godfrey never forgot his kindness. A given subject is, after all, an unwelcome task; it is like rubbing the sharp edge of genius on a poker, or bringing his nose to the grindstone; although he 'bides it,' yet he 'girns.' Had the idea of the work originated wholly with our hero, the labour would have gone down much easier, and he would have done it better. Fancy has the power of turning his fetters either to feathers or to iron; and the man who sleeps hand-cuffed, and imagines that he is swimming and has the full swing of his arms, has so far the advantage over reality, that he neither undergoes the exertion, nor feels the cold wet waves.

But other matters were on the eve of turning up, which we shall in good time allude to; for the poems which Godfrey had consigned to one of those 'painted bladders' the Annuals, as Lockhart savagely designates them, were not overlooked by the press, but were really

the means of first drawing attention to the name of Godfrey Malvern. These things we must reserve for a future chapter, leaving him for the present to his task-work, occasionally relieved by other trifles; but, above all, the little excursions he made with his beautiful wife in search of new lodgings.

CHAPTER XXVII.

IN WHICH WE LIFT UP A CORNER OF THE CURTAIN, AND LET THE READERS SEE A LITTLE FURTHER INTO OUR HISTORY—THEN AGAIN LEAVE THEM 'IN THE DARK.'

Before proceeding further with our story, we must throw a little light upon the early history of Squire Ingledew, prior to his becoming the proprietor of Sutton-cum-Bottesford. How he first came into that village, no one knew; some said that he was a 'kidnapped' child, and had been left behind by a gang of gipsies; others, that the wife of a travelling tinker had been seen leading him by the hand the day before; while a few contended that they had seen the child in the company of a ballad singer, in the market-place of Buttervote. One thing was clear enough,—he was found early one summer morning, sound asleep beside the stocks; picked up by an old farmer, and, after a few days, handed over to a vestry-meeting; when, just as they were about to consign him to the workhouse, Squire Emerson entered the vestry, pitied the little three-year-old urchin, who sat on the floor crying, with a lump of bread-and-butter in his hand, and took him home to the hall of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, where he was clothed, fed, and educated. Ned Stocks, as he was called, from the locality in which he was found, grew up and became a great favourite of the Squire's; and as he could write a good hand, and was clever at casting accounts, he soon rose from boot-boy to have the full management of his patron's affairs. While only a young man, he was entrusted with the sale of the whole produce of Squire Emerson's immense estates:—purchased or sold cattle, let farms, renewed leases, bought and sold land, and by degrees so managed matters after the old steward's death, that his countenance was more courted than the squire's, for his word 'was law.'

After a time, Squire Emerson married a very beautiful lady, who

was several years younger than himself, and who had no notion of burying her charms in the green seclusion of Sutton-cum-Bottesford; so persuaded her husband to take a house in London, and make such a figure as became a wealthy English squire. Fond of his wife, almost to a fault, he yielded to her wishes; and Ned Stocks, as the squire familiarly called him, was dispatched to London, to look out for a fitting mansion; for 'nobody could do these things like Ned.'

Once in London, the squire must still have Ned with him; he could no longer be spared to manage the business of Sutton-cum-Bottesford—he must look out for some trustworthy fellow to do it for him. Here again all was left to Ned, who having scraped an acquaintance with a cunning lawyer, at his recommendation took Hopkins, and made him his deputy steward. From that time Ned Stocks was rarely seen at the Hall; when he came down, it was 'like a thief in the night,' and he glided away again before it was day. All public business was now transacted through Hopkins; although every receipt of any consequence, every notice to quit, or increase of rent, bore the signature of Edward Stocks, who was already the possessor of thousands.

Meantime the good-natured squire let his wife have her own way in every thing; and she so managed matters, that she won over Mr. Stocks to her own side, while she launched out into the wildest extravagance. She gave parties, hired singers from the opera, bought pictures, plate, jewels, and in the course of three years, ran through an hundred thousand pounds. Field after field, and farm after farm, were mortgaged to feed her mad extravagance. Ned and the lawyer, and Hopkins, managed to muster the money in some way or other—the squire had long since ceased to enquire how.

About this period, the squire's wife gave birth to a son, and all seemed to be going on quietly, until her recovery, when the same routine of life was again resumed, or if anything, her extravagance increased. Matters were soon brought to a crisis!—the squire and his wife separated; she retired to France, to live upon the small annuity which her husband allowed her out of the wreck of his estate; the squire let his hall in the country, sold his house in London, and lived almost retired, with his child and Edward Stocks. Squire Emerson did not live long to bemoan his altered estate: he flew to drink for comfort; and this at first stunned, then ended him. He died, leaving Edward Stocks his sole executor; and on his death-bed, entreated him to act the part of a father to his son. Ned promised, without performing; for he well knew that very few years would see the estate of

Sutton-cum-Bottesford unincumbered with a debt, and that there was no other heir to it, saving the child entrusted to his care.

The rest our readers know. The child was put out to nurse, a rumour of its death circulated, Hopkins sent out of the way, the lawyer bought over, and the estate sold. No one in the neighbourhood knew that the proud, fashionably-dressed gentleman, who drove over in his carriage to look at the estate of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, previous to its being sold, was the same, who, when a brat, had sat squalling on the vestry-floor, with a lump of bread-and-butter in his hand, and not a living soul to own him. But he was then married, and had before bought some little estate, title and all, which allowed him to sign himself Squire Ingledew, with the full concurrence of the laws of the land, and the permission of the Sovereign. What he was before this, very few in that neighbourhood knew.

George Emerson, son of the deceased squire, and undisputed heir to the estate of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, had been entrusted by Squire Ingledew (for so we must continue to call him,) to the care of a widow, who herself had an only son,—'the child of her old age.' This child chancing to die, the squire, by some means or another, persuaded her to give it out, that it was not her own son who had died; and as the woman had lived in a secluded spot, the rumour was readily credited. The squire had gained such an ascendancy over the woman, that she was at last indebted to him for every shilling she possessed, and was compelled to do whatever he wished her. After a time the young squire was taken away from his nurse, and sent from one place to another, until the poor woman lost sight of him altogether. Edward Stocks had also, by this time, changed his name, nor could the widow obtain any clue to his 'whereabout.' At last she was compelled to go to the workhouse, and during a long illness, in which she was almost at 'death's-door,' she let 'the murder out,' and confessed all she knew. When Squire Ingledew neglected the widow, he also ceased to take any further notice of the child, except the remittance of money from time to time, in another name, until at length he ceased to do even this; for he heard that the schoolmaster, to whose care the young squire had been entrusted, was dead, and that his wife had taken to the child, and left England; and after this, he never cared to enquire what had befallen him. He had rested secure in the possession of the estate of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, (for there was no one to dispute his title,) until he so unexpectedly met with Hopkins, who he believed had been dead some years. Such is the true History of the Life of Ned Stocks, alias Squire

Ingledew, who was every inch a cool, calculating, deep, designing, and desperate villain,—although he was the father of our heroine, Emma.

It will be readily supposed, that a man, who had climbed into wealth and power by such dark and dangerous steps as we have described, was not likely to stick at trifles to uphold his position, or be very choice about the sacrifices he made to protect himself. Although he had seemingly yielded to Hopkins, and from the first, treated him as 'hail fellow, well-met,' yet, day and night had it been his constant study, to remove so formidable an object from his path. "He used to be fond of shooting," mused the squire to himself; "if I could but get him down to Sutton-cum-Bottesford, and there let him drink and hunt until my gamekeeper mistook him some dark night for a poacher, and shot him dead, it would be a good riddance." Just then he chanced to look round, and beheld his own face reflected in the large mirror which stood opposite, and he turned pale as death. He looked back as if he expected to see some one standing behind, so much did he seem unlike himself.

Turn we to Hopkins, who, although he now rolled in wealth, was far from feeling easy. Not that the sum he had received from the squire caused him any pain; it was the money intended for Godfrey Malvern, which lay with heavy weight upon his mind, and had caused him so much mental anguish since his interview with Squire Ingledew. Hopkins had left the house he before resided in, and had taken another, which he had furnished with the intention of letting lodgings, although this new residence was very near the old neighbourhood. His personal appearance was also much altered for the better; and his wife and children were now decently dressed. Since he became possessed of the hundred pounds, he had never let a day pass over, without endeavouring to discover the residence of Emma. "Could I but give her back part of what I have wronged her of," said Hopkins to himself; "I should sleep sounder after it. Her father is a villain! and although he can look on unmoved, and see her and her husband want, I cannot!—And yet I, not he, may be the cause of all their suffering!"

It was one evening—the close of a day spent like many others in the search of Emma, when Hopkins was returning to his new residence in Lock's-fields, that he saw Godfrey and his wife looking out for lodgings. They had struck down one of these streets, scarcely knowing where it might lead them to, and had halted at the front of several houses, in the windows of which were stuck notices of 'apartments to let.'

Hopkins knew Emma again at the first glance, and followed them for a considerable time, until, from their frequent halting and inquiries, he made a 'sure guess' of the business they were upon. There was something about this man's address, when he chose to make himself agreeable, rather prepossessing, something as winning and kind about his manner, when he chose to assume it, as there was dark and repulsive in his aspect, when the countenance was wrapt in gloomy thought while he brooded over some desperate design,—a face that changed from night to day; yet he had the power of making it light or dark whenever he willed it; although there were times when Nature herself unconsciously wrought the change. He approached Godfrey and Emma with something like a graceful bow, and accosting them, said, "I hope you will not consider me intrusive, in inquiring if you are in search of apartments, as I have some to let, which probably might suit you?"

Godfrey confessed that such was their object, but not exactly in that neighbourhood, although he admitted that it contained a few quiet, respectable-looking streets, and he hardly knew why he should be particular about the locality.

"That you must be the best judge of, sir," said Hopkins; "but, remember, if you have not here a fashionable neighbourhood, you have not to pay a fashionable price. I know what the West-end is, and you would look out a long time there before you could find a sitting-room and bed-room for ten shillings a-week, such as I can offer you!"

After some further conversation they consented to look at the apartments, and Hopkins led the way home. When he reached the house, he entered the parlour, and drawing his wife aside, said, "Mary, this is Ned Ingledew's daughter! Remember what I told you a few nights ago—show them the apartments; but not a word that we know them! I will, in good time, tell you all." His wife pressed his hand in silence, as if to assure him that she was satisfied—for a great change had taken place in the man, almost suddenly; and she led the way upstairs.

There was something about Mrs. Hopkins that at once won Emma's heart, her manner was so gentle; for sorrow had softened her nature, until there was nothing harsh left about it; and what little she knew of Emma's history caused her to sympathize with a young lady, who was so far reduced as to take up her abode in so humble a home as their own. "I will make every thing as comfortable as I can for you, ma'am," said the poor woman; "and you will find my two children

very quiet. As for myself, I have no visitors,—not an acquaintance in the wide world!"

These tones sank into the very heart of Emma, and she had much ado to refrain from crying, as she said; "Neither have I in London, only my husband! But there is a poor girl we should wish to bring with us. We shall want a room for her to sleep in."

It was an eight-roomed house, and it was soon arranged that Cinderella was to make one of the family.

After many entreaties, they were prevailed upon to stay supper. "It is but a little cold ham, and bread and cheese, that we have to offer you," said Mrs. Hopkins; "but if there is anything else you would fancy better, it will give me great pleasure to go out and fetch it."

Godfrey thanked her for her kindness; and Emma said, "there was nothing in the world she should like better than a thin slice of ham—it looked so relishing;" and they sat down and enjoyed themselves: for Hopkins had by him some excellent old bottled-ale. Little Georgey was up, and nothing would pacify him but to sit on Emma's knee, and pull her long ringlets, and kiss her; when, having ate and drank, and played, until he could no longer keep his little eyes open, he fell asleep on her knee. Mrs. Hopkins made many apologies about the child troubling her. Godfrey smiled, and said, "She is but getting her hand in." Then Emma struck Godfrey playfully on the shoulder, hung down her beautiful head, and blushed, imprinted a kiss on Georgey's cherry-lips, and sighed, while she thought how soon she should herself be a mother! Mrs. Hopkins seemed to read her thoughts, and made no further offer to take the child away, but stooped down and reached a stool, which she placed under Emma's feet, saying, "You will find this much easier."

Mrs. Hopkins then entered into a long story, and told Emma how Georgey got over the hooping-cough, small-pox, and measles; what a bad cold he caught the winter before, which affected his chest, and what a quantity of leeches he had had put on; and how kind Dr. Gattley had been to her, and had ordered the child to wear flannel, and that he had been free from inflammation ever since. And Emma kindly listened to her, and spent a much happier evening in that humble abode than she had ever done before in London.

Godfrey and Hopkins had lighted their cigars, and fallen into conversation; for there was something about the man that had from the first rivetted our hero's attention. His remarks were pointed and well

chosen. He had seen a great deal of the world, was familiar with many of its 'ins and outs,' had mingled with high and low society, and possessed a keen sense of the ludicrous. Although a villain, there were but few men who could make themselves more agreeable in company than Hopkins, and that night he attempted to do his best.

Godfrey Malvern was a keen observer of human nature, and soon discovered that all his companion's efforts were forced; that when the conversation flagged for a few moments, the brow of Hopkins fell, and his mind became abstracted from the subject they had been conversing upon, while his whole manner gave evidence that the brain was pondering other matters, far different from those which seemed then to be uppermost. While they were walking home, Godfrey remarked to Emma, that their new landlord was a strange man. "The moment I looked him full in the face," said Godfrey, "his eyes were instantly turned towards the floor; yet ere I had averted my glance, and again gazed upon him, they were rivetted full upon me, until some other thought seemed to take possession of him, and he was utterly unconscious of my presence."

"But his wife is a very feeling, motherly, kind-hearted woman," said Emma, "and one that I am sure I shall like."

"I hope you will," replied Godfrey, his thoughts instantly reverting again to Hopkins, as he recalled his strange and absent manner, which he compared to the mental restless torture a man is supposed to undergo who has been guilty of murder.

But could Godfrey Malvern have seen all that was passing within the bosom of Hopkins on that evening, he would have been the first to have forgiven him. Hopkins knew that he was a robber, and that the victim he had plundered sat before him; and once or twice he felt a strong inclination to throw himself on his knees before Godfrey, and confess how deeply he had injured him! A glance at his wife again changed his thoughts, when he beheld her conversing with Emma; for he knew the misery such a confession must inflict upon her. He quailed again beneath the fixed glance of Godfrey, and almost fancied that his guest read his thoughts—that he saw guilt branded upon his forehead! That wretched man half muttered a horrible prayer to himself, and wished the earth would open under where he sat, swallow him up, and bury all his crimes for ever! He would from that moment have become honest, had not pride risen up between him and repentance, and pointed with a scornful look to disgrace: his heart had not yet relented, the hard millstone was yet unbroken. A taunt

glimmering had, however, fallen upon the ruin; comparative riches had not brought happiness, and that night he would gladly have exchanged his more ostentatious residence for the lowly one he had but just quitted in the same neighbourhood, if he could but have received, with the barter, content, and a quiet mind. He resolved within himself, that he would repair the injury he had done to Godfrey, although he left himself without bread; but how to do this, and keep secret his own guilt, was a point his brains had not yet grappled with.

A few days after, Godfrey Malvern and Emma took up their abode in Lock's-fields; and that night Hopkins slept sounder than he had long before done; for he had come to the determination never again to draw, fraudulently, a shilling of the banker, but by some means to hand over Gruff's order to Godfrey.

But human resolutions are too often only registered upon sand, which the next wave may wash away.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men"—

which carries to destruction many who venture upon its current; while others glide along it safely, without caring to avoid its 'shallows or its miseries.' The same wind that blows one vessel into harbour, sometimes sinks another in the great deep.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

GODFREY'S POEMS APPEAR IN THE ANNUAL—HE MEETS WITH A NEW ACQUAINTANCE,—ATTENDS LADY SMILEALL'S SOIREE, AND IS DINNED WITH THE 'BLETHER OF BALAAM.'

Godfrey Malvern had scarcely settled down in his new lodgings, and again resumed his 'task-work,' before he was called upon to act his part in other scenes. The Annual had by this time made its appearance; and several of the leading Reviews, had both quoted and spoken favourably of Godfrey's poems, thus bringing his name, for the first time, fairly before the London public. A new scene now opened before him; though it was but a repetition, on a larger scale, of what he had witnessed in the borough of Buttervote.

There are in London, what, for want of a better phrase, we must

term a great number of 'LITERARY RAT-TRAPS;' and it is almost impossible for a young author to escape them. Should he miss one, he is sure to fall into another; neither will it do him much injury to be caught; for the bait, after all, is harmless. Godfrey's poems, as we have before stated, were quoted in several papers; some of them were given at full length, and these again were re-quoted by the cheaper order of periodicals. Thus, for three or four weeks, his name was kept afloat before the public; and his merits were discussed at several literary parties, some of whom were themselves contributors to the Annuals, and now and then, by dint of boring the editor, got little scraps of verse inserted in those quarter pages of the magazines, which would have been all the better if left blank. A new name was a god-send to such circles as these; and Lady Smileall, a great patroness of unfledged poets, after hearing Godfrey so highly spoken of at her last *soirée*, resolved to invite him to her next literary assembly. The following morning found the lady seated at her little inlaid-ivory desk, when taking up one of the smallest sheets of highly-scented and smoothly-glazed pink note-paper, she sat with her hand resting on her cheek for a few minutes; and looking into the large mirror opposite, until she saw that the right moment of inspiration had arrived, she scribbled the following invitation:—

"13, Hellabore Square.

"Lady Smileall presents her compliments to Mr. Malvern, and would be happy of his company on Wednesday evening next, at 10 o'clock, when she gives her fourth *soirée* for the season. Should Mr. Malvern honour Lady Smileall with a visit, she can assure him that he will meet with such society as must be congenial to a mind like Mr. Malvern's, fraught, as it is, with all the elements of genius. It is not only Lady Smileall, who is so anxious to have the honour of an acquaintance with so highly gifted a poet as Mr. Malvern, but also the wish of several kindred spirits, many of them authors of some repute, who will be glad to meet Mr. Malvern at Lady Smileall's, and share with him—

'The feast of reason, and the flow of soul.'"

The note was enclosed in a very beautiful embossed envelope; and the seal stamped with a very pretty device, which represented a young gentleman undressed, (for he had not a rag about him,) with a harp in his hand, looking upward, as if he expected it would soon rain, and with a kind of regret in his countenance expressive of a wish that he had

either brought his great coat or umbrella. The note was addressed to Godfrey Malvern, Esq., to the care of the Publisher of the Annual, who kindly forwarded it to its destination.

Godfrey was seated at his writing-desk, when Cinderella, (who had followed to share their fortunes in the new residence,) brought the note up-stairs. He read it through in silence, then handed it over to Emma. Emma, woman-like, was delighted at the honour paid her husband; and said, "Oh, you must go, Godfrey!—You 'll meet all the first men of the age, there; and it will be a great change, and a relief to you, after having sat so close to your desk as you have done lately."

Godfrey, however, had some doubts about the matter; for the editor of the Old Monthly Magazine had given him a description of one of these *soirées*, and there was nothing very tempting in it. He apologized to his wife about the lateness of the hour, (for she was not in a fit state to accompany him,) and told her how lonely she would feel at being left so long alone.

But Emma would have no 'nay,'—go he must; they had but little society, and there was no knowing what it might lead to. Emma made sure that all the talent and title of England would be assembled there; and would hardly have been astonished if it had led to her husband receiving an invitation to dine at Buckingham Palace.

Godfrey had also a secret hankering to attend; but his was a wish only to see and study character, for he was well prepared for the 'Balaam,' which he knew he should be dinned with. The invitation was therefore accepted: the day arrived, and Emma busied herself in setting off the person of her husband to the best advantage. A little ink on the worn elbows of Godfrey's coat, a button or two, and a few stitches, on what had once been a beautiful waistcoat, a pair of new kid gloves, a clean front and collar; and although Godfrey would hardly have passed muster in Bond-street, by daylight, without being classed under the head of 'seedy,' yet, by candle-light, he might have entered any room, and been taken for a gentleman. His fine tall figure, and intellectual cast of countenance, would, however, have drawn any eye from his dress, unless it had been of the shabbiest description.

A little after nine o'clock, he threw himself into an omnibus, at the Elephant and Castle, and was safely snuffing the aristocratical air of the West End, before it had struck ten. Neither could Godfrey Malvern avoid remarking the change of atmosphere, so different from what he inhaled while passing through Lock's Fields: there was none of that

smell of tobacco, onions, and fried fish, ditches, and uncleansed sewers, which impregnated the air about his own neighbourhood, although the street in which he himself lived, was tolerably free from these

"Ancient and fish-like smells."

At length he reached the square, and was struck by the number of carriages which drove up to No. 13; had it been daylight, he would have discovered that they were nearly all hackney-coaches culled from the nearest stands; and had he ventured very near, would have heard various unpoetical disputes about such every-day matters, as two-shilling, and one-and-sixpenny fares. But Godfrey kept his distance, took a survey of the house without, and saw that the drawing-room appeared large, and was well-lighted. While Godfrey was thus standing alone, he was accosted by a little, stout, red-faced, country-looking man, who was smoking a very strong cigar; and, who, speaking in a strong, north-country accent, said, "I say, can ya tell me which is number thirteen? There 's a *sworehè* to be gen there to-neet, and I 'm axed; though dom me, I would much rather be smoking my pipe, and drinking my pint o' porter, at hoam; for I reckon it aint much beer or bacca one shall get at these *sworehès*."

Godfrey pointed out the house, and said that he was also invited; then enquired of his uncouth acquaintance, if his name was not Grinder. For he had heard of a self-educated poet, who was at this time attracting some attention in London; and he thought it not unlikely that this rude Samson might have been called forth to make 'sport for the Philistines.'

"Yes, that 's my name," answered the countryman;—"Tom Grinder! and I don't care a dom who knows it! What 's yares? if it 's a fair question."

Godfrey told his name, without hesitation; and modestly added, "It is not yet so well known to the literary world as your own."

"But it will be, though," said Tom, shaking him heartily by the hand; "and I 'm dommed if I aint right proud to see thee, Godfrey. Thou 'rt one of the right sort,—one of Homer's true breed. Why, mon, I know all thy poems by heart; and I never could keep bad stuff in my head long in my life. Dal thee, I'm as pleased to see thee, as if I'd fun a five-pound note; and, though I say it, there's no humbug about me. I wouldn't praise the Queen's poetry, if I thought it was bad; no, not if she would make me her prime minister to-morrow. Come, and let's hev a sup of summat together, afore we go

among these fine folk. Dom me, we'll go in together; and let 'em 'no what poetry is, if they say owt."

Willing to humour his rude acquaintance, Godfrey went with him to the bar of a neighbouring tavern, where they had a glass of gin-and-water together; and it was only by promising that he would smoke a cigar with him after the party had broke up, that he was able to get Tom away before he had had 'a smoke,' as he termed it.

Up-stairs they went together. Tom would have bolted into the room, with his hat on, had he not seen Godfrey hand his hat and gloves to the servant; and, as it was, he carried his own hat in his hand; for, as he remarked to Godfrey, "Somebody or another might steal it, an it cost me four-and-sixpence only two days ago. There's no knowing whoa's whoa, in Lunnon."

The servant threw open the door; and announced the names of Mr. Malvern, and Mr. Grinder. Godfrey entered with the indescribable grace of a gentleman. Tom ducked and bowed, like a man drunk; and digging his hard, iron elbow into Godfrey's side, said, "Here's some dev'lish pretty lasses among 'em, Godfrey. Dal me, if I wont hev some fun afore I go."

Godfrey said, "hush!" and had much ado to keep from laughing outright; for his companion walked straight-forward, and threw himself into the first vacant chair, under which he thrust his hat, without waiting a moment for any introduction.

Lady Smileall was a woman of the world, and knew how to humour both her lions. Godfrey, she introduced to the most distinguished of her guests; then left him seated on the highest seat of honour,—the ottoman nearest the fire, between two very beautiful young ladies, who, in very sweet voices, told him that his poetry was "beautiful, delightful, heavenly!" and as Godfrey was a handsome young fellow, and they knew not that he was married, they looked at him almost like angels.

Meantime Tom maintained his seat, and Lady Smileall introduced one great personage after another, not one of whom he rose to receive, for he felt somewhat tired; besides, he knew no more about the ceremonies of society than a bear! Awful was the consternation he spread in a few moments.

"Mr. Moor wishes to be introduced to you," said Lady Smileall, pointing to a very tall thin gentleman, in nankeen trowsers, sky-blue silk waistcoat, pink stock, and pea-green coat.

"Happy to see you, sir," said Tom, holding out his hand. "Though

we're namesakes, man, I shall niver do nowt like your 'Lalla Rookh' —ya can beat me hollow; and after reading your poetry, I feel inclined to throw my own into the fire! It seems sich poor stuff beside yours. But, dang me, I thought you'd been a little broad-set chap, like mysen; only a bit more of the gentleman in you!"

Lady Smileall said, "This is not Mr. Moor, the author of 'Lalla Rookh!' but Mr. Marcus Julius Moor, who has written several very delightful things, which have only just been published."

Tom only shrugged up his broad shoulders, and said, "Oh! then I'm mistaken! I thought"—but he kept the remainder of his thoughts to himself; for, had he given vent to them, Mr. Marcus Julius Moor would have felt his dignity insulted. For Tom saw, after a second survey, and as soon as Mr. Marcus had uttered a few words in explanation, that the fellow was an arrant puppy, and a downright ass. Mr. Marcus was next introduced to Godfrey Malvern, and his reception was rather more courteous than Tom's; for Godfrey was a gentleman!

"I have long wished for an introduction to you, Mr. Malvern," said the puppy, running his fingers through his hair, then pressing them to his forehead. "I have a many things to say to you. Ah!"—and he made a grand pause; then added, "All men of genius are, I believe, at times absent—I mean, that when they wish to give vent to those feelings which boil and surge like a cataract, they can scarcely utter a word. Ah! it is frequently the case with myself; it is so now. I dare say you have often felt this; have you not?"

Godfrey admitted, that there were times when he could not express himself as he wished.

"What an intellectual creature!" exclaimed an old lady, who had overheard all that Mr. Marcus Moor said to Godfrey.

"All etheriality and soul!" uttered another, loud enough for Marcus to hear what she said. "What a heavenly life to sojourn with so highly gifted a being—to walk with him through the flowery pilgrimage of this thorny world!"

Under such encouragement Mr. Marcus could not do less than proceed, and he again broke out as follows:—"I thought you must have had similar sensations. Homer, we know but little of personally; Virgil had his absent fits; Ovid makes mention of them; Chaucer complains that he was not a fluent speaker; Spenser had great diffidence; Shakspeare and Milton also laboured under this inconvenience; but I suffer to a greater extent than any of these. Ah!—then, again, there are moments when my heart seems overcharged like

a——ah!——and I can at such times utter poetry faster than two amanuenses can write it down! Were I a father, like Milton, I should require six daughters to record my thoughts, or my paradise would be lost indeed! Ah! ah! I beg pardon, Mr. Malvern, I meant no pun."

"What an overflow of humour he possesses!" muttered the old lady; "and yet how familiar he is with all the poets! I wonder how one head can contain such stores of knowledge!"

"Now he is again absent," whispered a young lady. "How much he resembles Byron, as he stands leaning against the mantel-piece! I wish Miss Arabella Daubvile were here now, to make a sketch of him. Oh, it would be delightful!"

Godfrey thought that he was the veriest ass which had as yet brayed in his ear.

"By-the-by, Mr. Malvern, have you seen the little volume of poems I published, entitled 'The Bulbul?'" continued the puppy, starting suddenly from his affected reverie. Godfrey confessed he had not. "Then I will forward you a copy to-morrow," continued Mr. Marcus. "There are a few things in it which I am sure you will like; although they are but hasty compositions, the mere sweepings of my study, if I may so term them—pale lightning flashes, that announce——Ah! trifles! trifles light as air!"

"How modest of him to say so!" exclaimed the old lady. Then raising her voice she added, "Nay, I must not sit in silence, and hear the Muses thus slandered! You have thrown your wreath on Parnassus; and it is now the duty of every lover of poetry to preserve it. Nor will I allow even you to trample underfoot its undying fragrant bloom."

"It was but a bud from the wreath!" my dear lady, replied the ass, showing his teeth, and smiling killingly, even as an ass would look when pleased, if it could. "A blossom, that dropped as—ah!—But I will some day lay a worthier wreath at the feet of my admirers, or twine my brows with deadly nightshade!" And he knit his brows as he finished the sentence, and looked a 'very Herod!'

"What expression!" whispered the young lady. "Can't you see a likeness to the head of Jupiter in the Museum?"

"When he looks thunderbolts at Juno," whispered Tom to Godfrey —for he had now risen from his seat—"for letting the milk boil over, and spoiling his breakfast.—But come up here: there are more such like fools in this assembly! Godfrey, I'm d—d if I ever saw aught like it."

Thev passed on to another group, where the names of Raphael,

Rubens, Titian, and Guido, seemed as familiar as the commonest 'household-words,' and for a few moments listened to the eloquence of a sharp, thin, hatchet-faced gentleman, who might be seen during the day-time, prowling in the neighbourhood of the New-cut, or in the purlieus about Holywell and Wardour streets, where he picked up the works of the above-named artists, and sold them again to his friends for the trifling remuneration of about five hundred per cent.

"I care not for the opinion of any man living!" said this very confident gentleman. "I have studied the works of the old masters so long, that I cannot now mistake their style. There is a breadth, a depth, and a richness about their colouring, which is peculiarly their own. Let them be buried under the dust of ages, cracked, and torn, and disfigured, but with only one observable speck of colour, and I will pledge my honour to discover who was the artist, and that too without a moment's hesitation. Aye! as readily as a scholar can at the first glance tell French from Latin, or Greek from Hebrew; and I would venture so far as to give my opinion in writing. Indeed, I never sell a picture to a friend without giving a written warrant for its authenticity. Nor could the whole Academy, arrayed against me, alter that opinion one jot. One glance at a fold in the drapery, is enough to satisfy me respecting the originality of any picture that was ever painted."

"A devilish 'cute chap!" whispered Tom to Godfrey. "A great man at a small party. I dare say he gammons the flats nicely, and could make 'em believe my old mother's tea-tray was painted by Titian; and that the poll-parrot and the bunch of cherries are done better than Natur iver did aught in her life."

Godfrey moved on a little further, to where a small party encircled a very red-faced bald-headed gentleman, who was holding forth on form and matter, as if he had got a little comfortable chaos to himself:—"I say again, and I once more assert it boldly," proceeded this ruddy Sir Oracle, "that to bring ocular demonstration for the gaseous evolutions of terraqueous matter, and all those conglomerated particles which irradiate the etherial atmosphere, is utterly and morally impossible."

"Impossible!" echoed a tall thin lady; "the immateriality of all theories, founded on invisible essences, do more than prove it."

But pass we by phrenologists and philosophers, geologists, and all other would-be great men, who were so far beyond the present age, as to be disgusted with its ignorance,—who had written and lectured, until they had neither a reader nor an auditor left, so came,

brimful of disappointed wisdom, once a-week, to Lady Smileall's *soirées*, to enlighten all they could catch.

There Godfrey saw poets, who had published, but whose names were unknown, and whose works were unread. For their ideas were far, far beyond this age, and they looked big in the immortality of an hundred years hence. Future ages would do them justice: and this was consolation enough for them. They remembered how Milton was neglected in his day,—how many of our greatest writers died before their works were appreciated—of the little ones they never thought, for they belonged not to such. There he saw painters, whose productions had been rejected from the exhibition, through the jealousy of the Royal Academicians, men, to whom Eastlake, Landseer, Calcot, Etty, and many others, were mere children! but they also consoled themselves with the thought, that their works would be the pride of some future National Gallery, when the very names of all present academicians were forgotten. And the thin gentleman, who bought only the productions of the old masters, coincided with their opinions, for there he reigned judge supreme. Then came actors without end; —the very Hamlets of Shakspeare; the identical Shylocks which the immortal poet drew; the Lears and Othellos of the old editions; the living illustrations of the primitive text. Alas! they belonged not to a future age, that room was now their theatre. They had not the hope of coming years—no unborn generations to do them justice. But they had the past, for they had made their 'hits;' and had there been no Kembles, Keans, or Macready's would have stood at the top of the tree. Jealousy! Jealousy! the very passion which had destroyed so many Desdemonas, had annihilated all their hopes—had blighted all their buds. But there were still those who remembered what they had done; there were still one or two papers, which they had preserved, although you might now look long for their names, while echo only answered, 'Where! Where!' But these were notices written by men who understood Shakspeare, small though their circulation were; and although the papers themselves had but survived two winters, yet with them they had been all in all! Your Times, Heralds, Chronicles, Posts, Standards, Globes, and Suns, were nothing compared to them. Ichabod! their glory had departed.

Still every new author, artist, and actor, were here welcomed; for Lady Smileall allowed none to escape, that she could by any means get hold of; and the more popular they were, the more welcome they seemed. Godfrey was long puzzled to discover this secret; but he

found it out at last. For your truly popular men seldom came a second time—they were not to be 'humbugged' twice. Thus it was that Lady Smileall kept up her force—her old standards, her array of little greatnesses; for the disappointed only adhered to her faithfully. To those, on whom the great world had closed its doors, hers were open once a-week. What they did the remainder of their time, she never inquired. She never lent money, she had been so often disappointed. She never bought pictures, she had no room for them; yet she had early sketches and manuscripts from many a now powerful name. Albums, that would pay a thousand-fold for the cups of tea and small glasses of wine, swallowed by men of genius in their greenest stages. And although they came not now to her *soirées*, still she could not resist making known to every new comer that they had once been there. As for their productions, she would not have parted with them, no, not for any money! But tea and coffee were now about to be introduced, for all the visitors were assembled, and the business of the evening had commenced.

CHAPTER XXIX.

HOW TOM ASTONISHED THE COMPANY AT LADY SMILEALL'S SOIREE,—AND GODFREY MET WITH A VERY GREAT CRITIC, ABOUT WHOM THE READER WILL HEAR MORE IN SOME FUTURE CHAPTER.

AMID the chat and bustle which took place, as tea and coffee were handed round, and each visitor sank into something like order in the various seats which were placed around the room, Tom had thrown himself into a large easy chair, which stood in the centre of the apartment; and, in due time, the footman stood before him with the silver salver. "Tea or coffee, sir," said the servant, making a very graceful bend of the head.

"Why, I would rather hev hed a crust of bread-and-cheese, and a sup of porter," said Tom, curling up his lip as he looked into the small cups, which were but little more than half-full. "When I do teck tea, I mostly hev a good big bason full; then you see, it stands for a meal. But I'll trouble you to cut me a slice or two, of bread-and-butter, if you please,—a good fair thickness; this is nowt in

my way, for a supper!" Saying which, Tom emptied the plate, and bit through the four or five thin pieces he had taken up, at once, making a great hole and a large arch at the same time. The footman was too well-bred to laugh outright before company; but when he got down stairs he said to his fellow-servant, "There's a countryman up-stairs, astonishing them all, to-night; run out and get another loaf, or we shall have to go to-bed supperless."

Meanwhile Tom found himself in a dilemma; he held the cup-and-saucer in one hand, and the bread-and-butter in the other; but how to pour out his tea, and drink it, puzzled him more than it would have done, to have composed a sonnet. He looked round to see if there was a table at hand. They were all covered with either books or drawings, fancy boxes or writing stands, and other little knick-knacks, more ornamental than useful; so that, after having satisfied himself that it would be a deal of trouble to 'clear the decks,' he at length bethought himself of his hat, which he drew from under the chair, turned it crown-uppermost, and on it placed his cup, after having poured out the tea into the saucer.

"An admirable invention!" said Godfrey, seeing that the whole company were half-choking themselves with laughter, and wishing to draw a reply from his new acquaintance, not doubting but he would aim some sly shaft at the uncomfortable etiquette of large parties:—"I see, Mr. Grinder, you prefer the old country fashions, and enjoy yourself in your own way."

"Why," replied Tom, ceasing to blow the tea in the saucer, while he spoke; "different places, different ways, they say. And you see, in the country, we hev no more tables than we use. And my mother used to tell me that saucers were to drink out of, and cups to keep your tea hot in. But we used oftener to hev bread-and-milk than tea, a brown porringer and a wooden spoon, and a good lump of hoam-made bread. I should say, ma'am, I used to eat as much to breakfast, as your servant brought up on that tray to-night, for all the company." Lady Smileall smiled, and said that Tom's simplicity was delightful,—it was so *naïveté*.

Long Mr. Moor now ventured a shaft; and said, "I believe you have much finer cabbages in the country, than we can obtain in Town! Is not your county celebrated for its breed of swine?" Two young ladies tittered at the remark, and one whispered to the other, "How witty it was!" while Godfrey knit his brow.

Tom took the meaning; and, while helping himself to another cup of

tea, said, "I used to think so before I came to Lunnon; but the only difference is,—there is a style about a Town-pig, which beats ours hollow; they hev a way of dressing 'em somehow, and giving the pork a pinky colour. The pigs are longer and thinner than ours—they have a different grunt; ours grunt like very pigs, but some of your Lunnon long sort, remind me a little of the braying of asses! There is as much difference between a country-pig and a town-bred pig, as there is betwixt a real poet, and a fellow that tags words wi' rhyme, and makes literary stay-laces."

"What a strange comparison!" said Lady Smileall; "is it not, Madam Flybesky? You must have been a close observer of nature to have written such pretty poems as you have done, which do all but breathe of the country-air," continued Lady Smileall, wishing to give a new turn to conversation, and draw out the 'inspired clown.'

"It isn't that, ma'am," answered Tom, his dull, deep-set eyes kindling at the compliment. "It's because I love it, ma'am, with all my heart and soul! Anybody can observe!—that's nowt!—it's the feeling! There's as much difference between observing natur, and loving her, as there is in looking at one's sweetheart's image, made of marble, and heving her all alive before one; she may look cold and pretty, ma'am, as she always would, anyhow; but when you cum to open your arms, and take her to your heart, then you find out the difference. Natur loves those who love her!—the very hills, and woods, and rivers, inanimate as they may look, have all feelings, and affections. I loved them! and they, in return, have opened their huge hearts, and I have found therein a dwelling-place, such as the world knows not of."

Godfrey thought the marble image rather far-fetched; but was glad to see his rough acquaintance 'pluck up,' and hold forth, unabashed, amid society so new to him.

"I should say, from your writings, that you have been an early riser when in the country," continued Lady Smileall; "really, after reading them, I was tempted to get up one morning early, myself, and to go into St James's Park."

"You might as well hev gone into your own back-yard, ma'am," replied Tom, "for what you'll see of real natur there. Get out on the hills by Sydenham, or Norwood, and look over Surry and Kent; and that's the nearest peep you'll hev of her frae Lunnon. The landscape only wants a river to look like paradise. The cuckoo, the lark, and the nightingale, sing as sweetly there, as iver I hev heard 'em in my

own native woods. True, natur hezn't that wild look which she wears in the still solitudes amid which I was reared. But, she looks well, ma'am! Something too much, happen, of the soft finish that your town-born beauty wears,—her woods combed and braided, instead of flowing out in their wild, green curls,—the round-shouldered hills, craped and collared too much with villas, instead of rising bold and bare, and looking as when God first made them, in the dawning of creation. The gown too fashionably made, the boddice fringed with clipt hedges, and flounced with uniform trees, instead of the broad-blowing drapery, that falls loose, fills or streams out, all in keeping with the wild heath, shady woodland, or open moor. Around Lunnon they hev made natur a lady! She was born too handsome to hev her original beauty wholly destroyed, either by white-powder or carmine. If she hadn't, they would hev spoilt her long ago. In the far-off country, ma'am, she 's a bonny sun-burnt lass, who neither wears a veil, nor carries a parasol; but is up and out among the hills and woods all weathers,—her cheeks like roses, her teeth like pearls, and her breathing sweeter than new-mown hay.—But I'll trouble your sarvant, ma'am, for another lump of bread-and-butter. We beat you in the country for butter, ma'am;—we hev it fresh."

So Tom held forth, neither thinking nor caring for the titled people who surrounded him, for his thoughts had wandered to his own native hills. Men, who have even obtained a great name, seldom add to their reputation by mingling much in general society. The cause is easily assigned: the man of genius is content to leave his fame at home; while, in nine cases out of ten, the company he meets carry theirs abroad with them—they have no other market for it. It was very painful to Godfrey to see men, who might have immortalized their names, tossing themselves among the shallows of society—leaving their own native deeps, and struggling shoreward; just to make a moment's noise among the smart things that washed the shingles—the little petty waves, that make their tiny murmurs, and then are heard no more. It is in its own solitude where true genius shines; where the mind, unfettered by society, shakes itself free from all the forms of the world, and stands stretched to its full height. It is only in solitude where true beauty shows herself: expose her to the full gaze of the world, and she would shrink down blushing and abashed, like Venus couching under the light that streamed into the opening shell. Hence it is that great men, in all ages, have retired from the world, and buried themselves in solitude, while composing their immortal works; nor did we ever hear

of a true poet, who sought to gather a crowded audience around him while in the act of composition. Your bare-necked abstracted gentlemen, who lean their elbows on the mantel-piece, and imitate the position of the old full-length casts of Shakspeare, are your only interesting men at a small party; although there were one or two there on that evening, men of no mean repute, who contributed two or three bad puns towards the evening's amusement.

As for Tom, he was drawn out unconsciously; and when the wine began to circulate, he called on Godfrey for a song. Nay, he even went so far as to say to a very pretty young lady, who had drawn her chair somewhat closely to him, "Dal me if I shouldn't feel at hoam, if I had but a cigar!"

Though Godfrey was the lion of the night, the north-country poet attracted no small attention. Wine was there, and Tom drank, until at length he smacked his lips over each newly-filled glass, and swore it was almost as good as ale! He flirted with the young ladies, upset a table while attempting to give one of them a kiss, broke four glasses, and cracked a decanter! Promised to write in half-a-dozen albums; proposed getting up a dance, and called on the servant to bring in a 'cushion;' until he spread as much consternation in that intellectual assembly as a young bear would have done, had it been turned loose into the room. Never had the etiquette and ceremony, which was 'iced' to perfection at Lady Smileall's parties, been subject to such shocks of native rudeness before. The old ladies shook their heads, and censured such conduct apart. The young ones confessed he was very uncultivated; and in the next moment were at his side, either laughing at his rustic jokes, or some new blunder he had committed. Tom drank their healths in bumpers, called one Caroline, and another Margaret, just as he had caught up their names,—pledged Ellen and Arabella, asked Sophia for a lock of hair, and stole a rose from Christabel,—broke down every boundary of form,—and made more real fun than had ever before been witnessed at any of Lady Smileall's *soirées*. And when one, the most beautiful in that assembly—sat down to the piano, and sang one of his own songs, Tom said, "Dang me! I niver was so proud of my poetry before; and I believe now it was your sweet voice that made me like it." The high-born beauty smiled and blushed at the compliment.

But although Tom had made the greatest noise, Godfrey Malvern left the greatest impression behind. What he had said was more to the purpose; he had mingled the gentleman with the poet, and more

than one pair of beautiful eyes had been fixed upon him. Tom was not invited to a second *soirée*, while a dozen cards were thrust into Godfrey's hands. And there was one lady, alas! one, whom he helped on with her shawl and while he shook her hand at parting—he forgot, for the moment, his own dear Emma: —she was all poetry—all soul—all intellect.

Lady Smileall had promised to get a notice of Godfrey's poems, for she had influence to obtain a review of any work in one paper; and that paper was the one all her friends took in,—they cared not for the opinion of any other, that was their paper. And the editor, who was introduced to Godfrey, and never was known to miss one *soirée*, was the most talented man in the world. True enough, he had never written a single work—his mind was too mighty for so trivial a task, his nature too analyzing—he was far beyond this age. That Mr. Marall could write a poem, a novel, or a drama, no one dare dispute; but he venerated Milton too much to excel him,—had too great an admiration of Scott, to write what would throw all his works into the shade; and as for Shakspeare, he had been so long popular, that out of a love for the past only, he could not find in his heart to produce a drama, which would extinguish all so old a favourite had done. No, he was too great to become an author. He looked on the present race with an eye of pity; he knew that this was the age of 'little men,' and like a big eagle, that scorns to pick up an ear-wig, he turned his eyes to the sun; and so supped on its flooding glory; or went hungry to bed. He could just bend his big brain to contemplate the works of poor human authors—could so far sympathize with them as to take an interest in what they did; but write a work of his own he would not, he loved the poor world too well to mount the chariot of the sun, and, outstripping Apollo, extinguish its poor human combustibles in his own grand immortal blaze. He laid aside his thunder and lightning, and, like a considerate Jupiter, came to us poor Jezebels, a god with his night-cap on! He knew that he was a son of thunder, and that satisfied him.

True enough, Mr. Marall's was not altogether a bed of roses. He had cut up popular authors, whom he had outrageously praised in former times, for his was no half-praise. And it had rather an awkward look, when the aforesaid authors had gained so strong a footing with their publishers as to prevail upon them to put in his paper a former notice, in which their 'originality, sterling genius, and true poetry,' sounded oddly, after reading about their 'dullness, want of thought,

hackneied style, and servile imitation.' But it all brought in money, and Mr. Marall consoled himself by assuring his friends that no one read the advertisements, although he was prouder to see a few columns, than all he himself had written; for, as he said to his intimate friends, "They show the estimation I am held in by the publishers." But neither the great man, nor his paper lasted long. Tom and Godfrey lived to see them both damned and forgotten, and the great editor himself reduced to a very low state.

After all, there is no half-measure about criticism; it must either be first-rate or nothing. An author, who is at all popular, has generally more readers than such papers as Mr. Marall's. The standard journals generally let a man rest when he has once obtained a fair footing with the public; or, if they do attack him, they have their reasons for it, either political or otherwise—they all give 'the devil his due,' and pounce only upon 'fair game!' Neither can an editor be responsible for all that appears under his management. Private piques will peep out in spite of all the caution he may use; and the 'murder be out' before he is aware of it—he cannot write every thing. It is your little petty papers, that spring up in a night, and vanish with the day, who cannot get a popular author to contribute to their columns, that are the worst; who live only by corruption, puff paragraphs, and abuse, and whose reign is always of short date: not one has ever survived three years! Many such have we seen in our time, who have cut up a book merely because the publisher would not send them a copy to review, and have therefore been at the expense of obtaining one from a circulating library, and from which they have unfairly taken unconnected sentences, and misquoted or misrepresented passages, which read like nonsense, unless connected with the linking paragraph. But we here record it as a truth, founded on long observation, that every one of these papers, like pigs struggling to save themselves from being drowned, have, in the end 'cut their own throats.' There is but one—that we can swear to—in existence in London at this moment, and its days are numbered. Godfrey Malvern will be remembered when it is dead and forgotten.

CHAPTER XXX.

A CHAPTER CONTAINING MORE THOUGHT THAN INCIDENT, INCLUDING A LONG CONVERSATION BETWEEN TOM AND GODFREY, AND ENDING WITH A HINT TO GREAT PEOPLE, TO TREAT THEIR CINDERELLAS KINDLY.

THE grey dawn of morning was breaking over London, when Godfrey and Tom found themselves in the Strand, after leaving Lady Smileall's *soirée*, each carrying an album under his arm, which they had promised to enrich with original contributions. Tom was again thirsty; and it was only by retaining a firm hold of him, that Godfrey was enabled to drag him along; for wherever Tom saw a light, he either wanted to go in and have something more to drink, or else to re-light his cigar. After many entreaties, Godfrey at length consented that his companion should have a glass of ale, at the first house they found open, on condition that he would not stay. They walked along some distance, and found that all the public-houses were closed, until at length they met with a policeman, who bade them follow him, and he would find a 'shop,' where they might have whatever they wanted. The policeman led the way up a dark, dirty, narrow court, when having reached a side-door, he gave three slow, measured knocks, whispering to Godfrey, as the door opened, to take care of his pockets.

Although Godfrey Malvern had witnessed some odd scenes in London, the one that now broke slowly upon him through the dense cloud of tobacco-smoke, was entirely new:—it was a compound of strange characters, where the dandy and the dustman stood drinking side-by-side, and women, dressed in all the colours of the rainbow, mingled among the rough coats of cabmen, or drunk their gin neat, with disguised ruffians, and hired bullies. There stood the sharp-eyed thief, looking out for a chance, and ready to pounce upon the first drunken 'swell' that went staggering out of the door; beside him was ranged the ruffian, eager to pick a quarrel with the first who dared to cross him; while his companions stood at hand, ready to seize upon whatever they could during the scuffle. Women were there, from the little, stunted, gin-drinking girl of fifteen, with her boots unlaced, her bosom bare, and her hair, coarse as 'heckles,' done up with a broken

comb and a knob behind, to the well-dressed prostitute of fashion, with her painted cheeks, black silk shawl, and bonnet weighed down with artificial flowers, or costly feathers. Godfrey stood with his arms folded, and gazed in silence upon the scene, while Tom whispered aside to him, and said, "By gom! there's rum ens in Lunnon, Godfrey; why I saw some of these women in the boxes at the playhouse, and thought they were duchesses! Her there, spoke to me in the theatre, and said, 'what a delightful poet Shakspeare was;' and I had a long chat with her, and thought I'd niver talked to a more intellectual woman; when, do you know just now I heard her say to that fellow in the rough coat, 'Come, Jack, stand another glass of brandy!' Why, she would pass muster at Lady Smileall's *sworeke*, and niver be fun out if they but kept the gin away." Godfrey remembered his own adventure at the oyster-shop, and sighed; and while they walked along in the direction of Blackfriars Bridge, he said, "The scene that we have just quitted, is another page of the great book of life—it may be a little darker, or more sullied than the next; and yet when you turn over the leaf, you can scarcely distinguish the difference. There are many men of title, even at this hour, murdering time at gaming-houses; the same evil passions are in full play, and the ruffian in the gin-shop, who strikes down without hesitation the first that dares to call him a thief, has, so far, the advantage over the gentlemanly rake, that he can plead his passion in excuse, while the other retires home, sleeps upon his grievance, and the next morning calls out the man he has perhaps both robbed and insulted, and deliberately shoots him. The world may censure me," continued Godfrey; "but from my heart I can find many an excuse for those unfortunate girls, who infest the streets of London; nor do I think that a more unjust law was ever passed than that which refused protection to a fallen woman. Many a one, young and thoughtless, has made a false step, from which kindness only could have recovered her: the failings of youth require gentle, not harsh measures to heal them; for human passions, and human feelings, are 'nature's gentlest crimes;' they have but little fellowship with hard and iron villany. Look how kind-hearted Goldsmith has treated the fallen Olivia! There is a lesson written down for all who choose to read it! And Burns, who knew as much of the frailties of human nature as most men, says,—

'To step aside is human.'

But the time will come, when these things will be altered, and our

statute-books be filled against such crimes as these, with 'very gentle,' instead of 'most biting laws.'"

And Godfrey talked on, and was sincere in all he said; for he knew not the temptations which fate had yet in store for him. They reached Blackfriars Bridge just as the sun was rising; and Tom, who was by this time a little sobered, made Godfrey stop to admire the beauty of the scene. "Do but look," said Tom; "isn't it beautiful?—see how the sunlight comes down upon the river, turning ivery ripple into a ridge of gold. Then look around! ivery roof, ivery spire, the huge dome of St. Paul's, the grey old church towers, are all lit up with a rich mellow light,—brilliant, yet the splendour subdued; silent, yet all looking instinct with life. No sound, no smoke! Forget the few solitary individuals* you see about, and we may fancy that we hev cum upon a charmed city—a deserted capital; or, that if there are any inhabitants, they have sunk under the spell of a long sleep. Heigho! Godfrey!" added Tom, heaving a sigh; "It's a sad, although a sweet sight! they who see only its broad streets and wealthy shops, know little of what its crowded courts and narrow alleys contain. I've stud upon the hills, on such a morning as this, in the country, Godfrey, and looked down upon the thatched-roofs of the cottages in the valley beneath me, and known most of the cares they contained—all their poverty, and sickness, and family troubles. But here, one house only has sometimes been a mystery. I hev lived in London without knowing how the people in the floor above, or below me, got a living; although the same roof has sheltered us for weeks. One fellow used to go out ivery night exactly at twelve o'clock; of course I set him down for a thief, until I found out he was a baker. Another used to cum hoam early in a morning; I thought he was no good,—poor fellow! he was a watchman. Another chap used to go creeping down stairs, long afore it was light; he puzzled me nationly, until, one morning, I met him cuming in with a basket of fish: he had been to Billingsgate Market."

"You must have lodged in queer quarters," remarked Godfrey.

"I have, indeed," answered Tom; "places where it wasn't safe to leave your boots on the landing until morning to be cleaned, for fear of the gentleman in the next room putting them on in mistake; where it wouldn't do to get more than a quarter of a hundred of coals in at a time, nor above a pennyworth of butter; where they borrowed a slice of bread until the baker came, asked for the loan of your tea-pot, before you had had a first cup, and came for your grid-iron with the steak on it; where there were only two coats in the house, and first floor went

out to a party while the gentleman in the second floor sat at home in his shirt sleeves, and sometimes received a ticket which told him how his coat was left to the care of a relation."

"And yet you wrote amid such scenes as these?" said Godfrey.

"Wrote! why not?" replied Tom. "I believe I wrote all the better, through being in the midst of them. They used to set me a thinking, Godfrey. Not that I was iver very seriously inclined; but when I saw the remains of what had once been a beautiful woman, living up in a garret, badly dressed, and badly fed, yet her moral character uninjured, I used to sit down and axe mysen how it was; and sometimes I got hold of a bit of her history, sometimes I smoked a pipe with her husband, sometimes I lent them half-a-crown when they were short; and you've no notion of the knowledge I gained, or the histories I heard. Happen she who reached me a light, had had servants to wait on her! had been brought up like a lady, until she got married! Law-suits, misfortunes in trade, some misunderstanding in the family, a death, or a few angry words, or some seeming trifle, had altered their fate for iver, and they were niver able to look up again. Some authors say they can find nothing to write about. There is scarcely a house or a family, or a stranger in the street, when you come to know them, but what can furnish forth matter for a three-volume work. Ivery man carries within him his own romance in reality! It would be a queer book, Godfrey, if ivery parish kept a large folio, and ivery man had to fill up a page of it, with an account of his own life, and the chief events which have befallen him!"

"It would, indeed," rejoined Godfrey; "and many a strange record would be found in it. Many a man who now holds his head erect, and prides himself on his respectability, would yield the wall to the veriest beggar! Many a proud upstart who was spawned in the dark corners of corruption, and had battened on broken hearts, whose every grain of gold had been gathered from blood, and tears, and sighs, would sink again into the filth from which he was first bred, nor dare to walk between the shadow of an honest man, and God's blessed sunshine! But here is a cab on the stand: I will put you down at your own door, and then get the man to drive me home. It is the first time I ever was out at this hour, and I feel rather ashamed of myself. If these be fashionable hours, may I be delivered from them in future. I know not what Emma will think!"

So they drove homewards, and Godfrey gave Tom a general invitation to visit him whenever he felt inclined.

And where was our own dear Emma during this live-long night?—Seated at the window, where she had watched through the long hours of darkness, had listened to every footfall, and hearkened to every voice; while poor Cinderella sat sound asleep in a chair beside the fire, for no persuasion could induce her to leave her mistress;—and yet no Godfrey came! She had sat out the stars, and the gas-lamps, had seen the late drunkard return reeling home, and the poor mechanic sally forth to his daily labour, carrying his humble fare in a basket, and counting the hours that would intervene before he should again see his wife and children. All this she had seen, yet no husband came, although the morning sunshine was now sleeping upon the streets. At length she gave way to her feelings, and tear after tear slowly chased each other down her pale but lovely cheeks. She began to fear something had happened to him; that he had lost his way, or been molested in some dark street. Then came other thoughts;—might he not have met with society far more congenial to his taste than her own was! Men of kindred spirits, or women of high intellect, whose accomplishments were far beyond hers, and who, by their fascinating manners might estrange his affections from her, and make him forget his own fond Emma. And she blamed herself for persuading him to go. At length she heard the sound of wheels! she threw up the window, and beheld her husband; and rushing down stairs, opened the door, and threw her arms around his neck, exclaiming, "Oh, Godfrey! I thought you had forgotten me!"

Few and homely though these simple words were, they sank into Godfrey's heart; and the raven ringlets and dark eyes, and face lit up with an eager, though silent meaning, flashed full upon his 'mind's eye,' as he recalled the countenance of the lady whom he had that night helped on with her shawl, before leaving Lady Smileall's *soirée.* It was the first time that his conscience had ever smote him for harbouring in his bosom, even for a moment, another image than that of Emma's!

Poor Cinderella! she was with difficulty aroused from her sound slumber, where she had sat with her head thrown back, and her mouth wide open, and her little old-fashioned cap half off her head! Dearly did this poor creature love her kind-hearted mistress! She wept when she saw her low-spirited, and sang when she found her merry. And, oh! her singing, it was a mixture of all street sounds, a mingling of the tones in which the man cried water-cresses, and the ragged boy who accompanied himself, while jumping 'Jim Crow,

down to some odd note picked up while listening, as she stood with her basket on her little arm, to the organ of the Italian boy. And the odd way she had of showing her affection, the original notions she entertained of a lady's appetite, and the 'tit-bits' she sometimes bought out of the few pence that were occasionally given her. If Emma was poorly, and could eat but little breakfast, so sure as Cinderella went out, and had a penny of her own, she would bring in something 'so nice,' and endeavour to persuade her mistress to partake of it, saying, "Oh, do have a bit; it's so good!" Strange were the tastes of our poor Cinderella. At times she would bring in a few shrimps, the smell of which was enough for Emma; or a crab, which she had picked up for a penny, one of an old date; or two or three large whilks, or a thin outside rasher of ham; a stale egg, or three-days old pastry, and she would hang about her mistress; and although Emma invariably declined tasting such 'dainties,' yet sometimes she would take them, and put them away, promising to taste a little when she felt inclined, then seizing the first opportunity to throw them into the street, while her heart acknowledged to itself all the poor creature's well-meant kindness; and it really grieved her to refuse accepting it. And Emma's smiling countenance and Godfrey's approving smile, made poor Cinderella very happy; and sometimes she went into a corner and cried to herself, when she thought of the change which had taken place, since she left the service of the big gin-drinking brute of a landlady!

And here we must digress for a few moments, and speak a word or two in favour of the poor Cinderellas. There are too many who treat their servants with less kindness than they do their dogs, who never in their lives evinced a spark of affection, or showed a sign of gratitude to the poor 'hirelings' who administer so much to their daily comforts; who 'pay,' and consider that it would be 'letting themselves down,' were they to be either kind or familiar to their servants. To such we would recommend the perusal of 'Lockhart's Life of Sir Walter Scott,' and there they will find how a good and a great man treated his domestics; and how they clung to him in return, amid his fallen fortunes. There are passages in the above-named work which ought to be framed and glazed, and hung up in every gentleman's house. They would serve alike as a lesson to master and man; for who can forget the old coachman trying his hand at the plough, and the kind master looking on, and promising that, if better days came, 'easy

should be Pepe's cushion.'* Kindness is the safest capital a man can invest—the returns are an hundred-fold, and there is a pleasure in the outlay. It is a wealth which all may possess who choose—it makes even a beggar respected. Nay, we have seen a waiter, in a low ale-house, bring in half-a-pint of beer with a smile, and place it kindly before a poor customer, who never in all his life rewarded him with a penny, while he paid no attention to the ostentatious and domineering order of the wine-drinking, well-dressed gentleman in the next box, who added to his commands a 'be quick, sirrah!' God never or dained any man to be a slave, he made us all equal. Look at the letters written upon every grave! examine the dust of the dead! then point out man's great distinction! The common clod at last unites us all in one family! 'The mind's the standard of the man,' while here below.

* "I must note how greatly I admire the manner in which all his dependants appeared to have met the reverse of his fortunes—a reverse which inferred very considerable alteration in the circumstances of every one of them. The butler, instead of being the easy chief of a large establishment, was now doing half the work of the house, at probably half his former wages. Old Peter, who had been for five-and-twenty years a dignified coachman, was now ploughman in ordinary, only putting his horses to the carriage upon high and rare occasions;—and so on with all the rest that remained of the ancient train. And all, to my view, seemed happier than they had ever done before. Their good conduct had given every one of them a new elevation in his own mind; and yet their demeanour had gained, in place of losing, in simple humility of observance.

"All this warm and respectful solicitude must have had a preciously soothing influence on the mind of Scott, who may be said to have lived upon love. No man cared less about popular admiration and applause; but for the least chill on the affection of any near and dear to him, he had the sensitiveness of a maiden. I cannot forget, in particular, how his eyes sparkled when he first pointed out to me Peter Mathieson guiding the plough on the haugh:—'Egad!' said he, 'auld *Pepe* (this was the children's name for their good friend),—auld Pepe's whistling at his darg. The honest fellow said, a yoking in a deep field would do baith him and the blackies good. If things get round with me, easy shall be Pepe's cushion.'"—*Life of Sir Walter Scott*, vol vii. p. 89. Edit. 1838.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A CURIOUS CHAPTER, IN WHICH WILL BE FOUND A MARVELLOUS DISCOVERY AND A WONDERFUL CHANGE, WITH A GREAT DEAL THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN LEFT OUT, AND YET IS ALL THE BETTER IN, PROVIDED THE READER THINKS SO.

During the time in which the events transpired, as they are recorded in the last chapters of our history, matters had arrived at a climax between Mr. and Mrs. Gruff. Gregory, as usual, had retired to his study, and was absorbed in his meditations among the planets, when his reverie was broken by an altercation in the next room, which rose to such a height, that the disputants did not hear him open his study door; neither were they aware that he had ventured forth upon the 'landing,' or that the chamber-door stood ajar. Gregory Gruff was no eaves-dropper; and when he came out of his study, it was with the intention of inquiring if anything was the matter, until the words 'five months in the family way!' and 'six months gone!' and 'large enough for eight months!' arrested his attention; and he began to think that his wife might be near her confinement, and was afraid either to venture in or speak at such a time. He had not, however, stood long, before he discovered that the dispute arose between Mrs. Gruff and her dress-maker; and that the subject was —— but we must report such portions as Gruff himself overheard: suffice it, and long before the conclusion, Gregory had made up his mind 'to cut and run.'

"Believe me, madam," said the dressmaker, "when I say that it looks too full, and that three thicknesses of the padding might be taken out until another month, or so; for it makes you look as if you had nearly gone your time, instead of only six months."

"Padding! padding!" muttered Gregory to himself, outside the door.—"The Devil! and have I been calculating the planets all this time, for padding? Oh! the ——" (how Gruff finished the sentence, we leave our readers to imagine: he called her anything but a lady.)

"Dont you think," replied Mrs. Gruff, "that if I were to leave off my bustle, the dress would sit fuller in the front, and appear as if I really were in ——" here her voice became so low, that Gregory, with

difficulty, caught the conclusion of the sentence; and then again he heard something about a 'carriage,' and 'Miss' somebody, whose name he lost.

"A bustle, too! eh?" echoed Gregory; "d—n the woman!—she's all padding! But I'll soon leave her. I wish the Devil had Mrs. Shufflebottom, with her little bustling shop, and all her tiddlywinks."

"That would not make much difference, madam, in the appearance," replied Mrs. Shufflebottom; "perhaps if I were to take off the flounces, it would answer better. Pray how much longer do you intend to continue the padding, before you give it out that you have had a ——"

"Perhaps another month," answered Mrs. Gruff; "he has not yet decided upon the carriage he intends buying, although he has been to look at several. He is one of the most whimsical old fools that ever a woman had to deal with. What a way he'll be in, if he ever finds out how I've served him!"

"He will that!" replied Mrs. Shufflebottom, laughing. Mrs. Gruff laughed also; then added, "But we must not make such a noise, or we shall spoil all his calculations, and upset his planets." And they laughed louder than before; and had not ceased, when Gregory, no longer able to control himself, burst into the room, and kicking Mrs. Shufflebottom's box out at the door, he exclaimed, "Be off, madam! or I'll send you after it.—I'll padding you, if you ever come here again!—and as for you, madam! ——" But Mrs. Gruff had fainted: she went off like a pistol, the instant her husband entered the room, having only just presence of mind enough to ring the bell for Mary, before she was in the very heaven of hysterics. Mrs. Shufflebottom picked up the remains of her box, and retreated without a word.

While Mrs. Gruff 'oh! oh'd!' and Mary held the smelling-bottle, Gregory paced the apartment like a raging lion, smashed the little cot he had bought for young Gregory, and pitched the large pincushion which stood on the dressing-table, out of the window; opened a little drawer, which Mrs. Gruff had often shown him in confidence, and took out a handful of little caps, and tiny bed-gowns, fringed with lace; and sent after them, shirts and flannels, that would not have been much too large for either Oberon or Titania, until the village-street was sown with 'babby-linen,' and small napkins, fit only to cover a fairy's table.—After these, walked Mrs. Gruff's dress, padding and all; and fortunate it was that his wife so far recovered, as to be able to run down stairs without the help of Mary, and to lock herself up in the parlour; for to

such a pitch had Gregory's anger reached, that, ten to one, she might have been sent after the 'cradle, babby and all!' and left to regret that she had not the power of a 'cherrybum' to soar 'into a tree-top.' Not content with this, Gruff opened the door of a cupboard, and began to smash no end of bottles of 'Godfrey's Cordial,' and 'Daffy's Elixir,' which were stored up in case young Gregory should ail anything when he came. And at every smash, the old man swore beautifully; there was a sincerity in what he did; and ever and anon, he thumped his own head, and called himself a fool; he even went so far as to rush into his study, and tear up all his works on Astrology, took up a knife and cut his wife's portrait into ribbons; while a large crowd who had assembled outside, huzzaed, as article after article came out of the window, crying "Go it, Gregory!" until at last Gruff threw out something which astonished them, and made a clear gangway.

A man in a passion is like a fire that only rages whilst there is material at hand to feed the flames; this once exhausted, and what was before an alarming blaze, sinks down into a pale, grey, ashy pile, only dangerous to those who thrust their fingers into the mouldering heap. When Gruff could find nothing further to destroy, he threw himself down in his easy chair, pressed his hand to his forehead, and said to himself, "Gregory, you have been a great ass!—a fond old fool!—— A child!—a curse—an Egyptian plague—a shoal of doctors and nurses, worse than frogs in the chamber. Well, I am spared all this. And yet, it is annoying to have nothing after all!—better the mountain had brought forth a mouse, than a pile of padding! We may laugh at the fox in the fable; but, no doubt, if he had tasted the grapes, they would have set his teeth on edge. I have been saved from a deal of trouble,—squalls by night, and screechings by day, chin-coughs, small-pox, measles, and ring-worm, and that interminable source of all infant outcries, the cutting of teeth. And yet it would have smoothed the hours of my old age, to have taught the young dog Astrology, to have made him —— bah!—perhaps a greater fool than myself—a laughing-stock for some unborn widow! But I will yet cry quits with her,—I will ——"

But before Gregory had fully resolved what he would do, he heard the sound of a horn without, and putting on his hat, he rushed down stairs, hailed the coach, placed himself inside, and without further preparation, set off for London.

"All my pains and labour are at an end, Mary," said Mrs. Gruff, as she saw her husband depart. "The coach and horses are gone!"

"All gone, ma'am!" replied Mary; "and we have had all our trouble for nothing."

"But we can still follow him," said Mrs. Gruff; "the law will compel a man to maintain his wife, whether she has a child or not, so let's set about packing up, and be off to-morrow."

So leave we the pursued, and the pursuers.

Meantime, several days had elapsed, and Hopkins had never once been near his home, neither could his poor wife obtain any tidings of what had befallen him. He had been traced to a low ale-house, at which he had lost all his money, but beyond this, no clue could be gathered of his 'whereabout;' he had left the house a little after midnight, but whither he had gone, no one knew.

Squire Ingledew had also quitted London rather suddenly; and it was given out that he had retired to some fashionable watering-place, for the benefit of his health. Before his departure, he had written a letter to his daughter, and, unsolicited, offered her a home at the Hall of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, during the period of her confinement, with full liberty to return to her husband after her recovery, but on no account to bring Godfrey with her. A letter from so unexpected a quarter, was received and read with astonishment. Godfrey was for throwing it on the fire at once, and looked upon it as an insult offered to himself. Emma thought it looked like a first offer towards a reconciliation, and doubted not but that if she were once more on familiar terms with her father, it would not be long before he again extended his friendship to her husband. Indeed, it grieved the tender-hearted Emma to see Godfrey labour so assiduously with his pen, and meet with such poor remuneration; and she felt it her duty to do something towards bettering his circumstances, although it might be purchased by a brief separation. She knew that an 'expensive time' was drawing near, and was well aware that the low state of their income was inadequate to meet any extra outlay; what she did, was done for the best; and having obtained Godfrey's 'reluctant consent,' she accepted her father's offer, stipulating, however, that her husband should be allowed to visit her once a-month, during the period she remained at her father's; and this was granted, on condition that he slept not within the Hall of Sutton-cum-Bottesford. So matters were arranged; and poor Cinderella was to accompany her mistress into the country.

Trifling as this slight change may appear, it had been the means of causing Emma to think seriously how she could best contribute to-

wards altering her husband's circumstances; and, fondly as she loved him, she determined to sacrifice her own feelings, and steel her heart to bear with his absence, although that very heart seemed half-broken at the thoughts of being separated from him, though only for a month at a time. "I cannot bear to see him labouring day after day, and night after night," argued Emma to herself; "his face growing paler, and his appetite failing daily; and all this to keep me in comfort—all borne without murmuring, and endured patiently, for my sake. I will make one more struggle for him; and ere long, he shall either reside with me under my father's roof, or I will never cross the threshold of the Hall again."

The same strong feeling which had taken possession of her, on the night of the election, when before her marriage she walked with Godfrey in the garden, and dared her father to do his worst, was once more uppermost; and this time, her resolution was summoned forth in a noble cause,—the defence and welfare of her husband; for our Emma was 'every inch' a woman, in the purest sense of the word. The parting scene was a painful one; Emma hung about her husband, and wept like a child; thrice did she tear herself away, and again return to embrace him—and Cinderella cried for company. But not a tear stood on Godfrey's cheek; pale he was, almost to the ashy hue of death; his lip quivered, and his utterance was half-choked, as he kissed her, and muttered a last 'good-bye,' but not a tear rolled down his cheek.

It was when he returned home, and sat beside his now lonely hearth, that the dammed-up torrent of his feelings burst forth, and tore down every proud barrier; and in the height of his agony, he exclaimed, "Wealth and comfort have weaned her away from love!—Let her go!—I will wage the unequal fight alone!—though I would have sold my heart's-blood, drop by drop, if shedding it would have saved her from want."

Alas! he knew not that the pangs Emma then endured, were for the love of him alone! he heard not her sobs, as the coach rolled away, saw not her pale beautiful head reclining on Cinderella's shoulder, when she had fainted. 'Shed his heart's-blood!'—stuff! she would have borne hunger and cold, wandered thousands of miles bare-footed, sacrificed sleep and food, given him the last drop of water in the world to have slaked his thirst with, though her own tongue had cloven, dry and parched, to the roof of her mouth at the same moment,—have bared her tender bosom, and pillowed his head upon it, in the darkest

and coldest winter night, and on the loneliest moor that ever the bleak wind blew across, unchecked by either bush or brier. She would have died for him, and demanded no thanks, if by doing so, she could have contributed to his happiness. The love that the purest angel ever bore in its breast through heaven, was not less devoid of selfishness than our Emma's—she was a woman, frail only in her fondness; her only weakness was felt in bearing the great burden of her love; her affections were worthy of being enshrined in the breast of an immortal, in place of a frail tabernacle of flesh, and all the 'ills which it is heir to.'—Even Godfrey Malvern, with all his talent, was unworthy of her; the very atmosphere that his fondest affection breathed, was close, hot, clouded and sultry, when compared to the clear heaven of love in which her spirit sunned itself. It was for his sake, and not her own, that she 'did what she did.'

When his passion had somewhat subsided, Godfrey sat down and examined himself; and was startled, as the question shaped itself before him, and seemed to demand an answer to the enquiry, "Did he really love her, after all?"

"What have I not endured for her sake?" argued Godfrey to himself; "what sacrifices have I not made? What nights have I sat up alone and worked on cheerfully until the grey day dawned; my labour sweetened with the thought that she slept soundly, and knew no want? And now she embraces the first chance that offers itself; and leaves me to struggle on alone. Cursed be her father's wealth! I would not touch a shilling of it, if even so paltry a sum would save my life! Better had she been linked to some fox-hunting country squire! one who would have drunk out the same number of bottles which his forefathers had done before him, added a new window to the church, and a new wing to his hall; then left another race of dolts to have peopled it,—hunted, drunk, broken their necks, and so slept with their fathers! She wants the daring soul which has courage enough to soar side by side with a spirit that hungers only for immortality, and spurns the gross earth it is compelled for a time to feed upon! Would Maria have left me thus? Never! No, although I had been compelled to beg my bread, like Homer of old, hand in hand, she would have wandered with me to the world's end!"

And the dark eyes and black ringlets of the lady he had met at Lady Smileall's *soirée*, rose before him! She, who was all so[illegible] sentiment, and could love the intellectual alone! And [illegible]ough to [illegible] himself with the thought, that there was still amuse[illegible] he

found in London; and kindred spirits, who could sympathize with a so great and injured a genius as himself!

Then his better feelings prevailed, as he glanced around the room. There stood the chair in which she was accustomed to sit—his fancy filled it with her image. She seemed to look on him, as she ever looked—love trembling in her eyes—so meek, so beautiful! He could almost imagine he felt her breath on his cheek, as he many a time had done, when she stole silently behind his chair, took away his pen, and hung over him. When, with averted head, he turned to look at her, felt her lips glued to his own, and heard her say, "Come, my love! give over for to-night"—when she unloosed his neckerchief, and let him have no peace until she had coaxed him away to bed, and he was compelled to confess that all this looked "very much like love!"

Godfrey Malvern had a range of fancy wide enough of his own, but self shut up the vision within its own narrow limits, and we all of us are, either more or less, blinded by our own measured and circumscribed views. We think too much of ourselves, to use the most selfish interpretation of such a sentence, and forget that there are others enduring greater pangs than we endure, although we are the cause of all the pain they undergo. They, anguished, sad, and half-broken-hearted, thinking only of us; we, selfish, hard and cruel, thinking only of ourselves. The man about to be hung, who, when asked why he wept, replied, "It is at the thoughts of the pain my mother will undergo, not at what I myself am about to suffer!" was more worthy of a marble monument than of the gallows, although he had committed murder. There is something in this world goes wrong; what it is will one day or another be discovered, though perhaps long after this generation hath passed away. Had Godfrey only followed in imagination his beautiful wife to the hall of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, and pictured her sitting alone in those splendid apartments, thinking only of him, he would have forgotten the dark-eyed and dark-haired Maria!

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CHAPTER XXXII.

HOW HOPKINS KEPT HIS GOOD RESOLUTIONS, AND WHAT BEFELL HIM IN CONSEQUENCE—A CHAPTER WHICH PROMISES TO LEAD THE READER INTO A FIELD OF NEW ADVENTURES.

We must now follow the footsteps of John Hopkins, to account for his long absence from home. Hopkins, as we before stated, had resolved to alter his course of life; had determined to refund the money he had defrauded Godfrey Malvern of, and to live within the limits of the sum allowed him by Squire Ingledew. But the Squire had also laid down his own plans, and set a secret agent to work, who, for 'a consideration' had promised to remove Hopkins for ever from his path. Elated with the good resolution he had formed to himself, Hopkins had on the very evening he was missing, indulged himself in an extra glass of grog, as he thought for the last time; for, in future, he had determined to spend his evenings at home with his family. He had called at several of his old haunts, and paid off many little debts, some of which he had long owed for drink; others were small sums of money which he had occasionally borrowed. Nor was he aware, that wherever he went he was watched and followed by a ruffianly-looking man, who wore a shaggy pilot-coat.

There are to be found in many an obscure corner of London, numbers of low ale-houses, the dark back parlours of which are either lit by a sky-light, or an inner casement, which catches the dim reflected light from some outer window, that is passed through another and another, before it enters the last, dusky, dismal, and miserable apartment. And in such places as these the gas is kept burning all day long; for those who frequent them inquire not, when it is either day or night, but drink, smoke, eat, and play at cards, until all their money is lost; or they are overpowered by the fumes of gin, and smoke, and sink down to sleep upon the wooden benches. It was into one of these dreary dens that Hopkins entered about dusk in the evening, to pay off a score which had been long standing against him, when he was followed into the bar by the man who had so long been dogging his footsteps.

"Hey, Jack!" said the man, familiarly addressing Hopkins, as he

entered the bar, and holding out his hand as he spoke; "why, you are a stranger! Bill and I were talking about you only last night, and wondering what the devil had become of you. He swore that you had turned Methodist; had mounted a black coat and a white neckerchief, combed your hair as straight down as a yard of pump-water, cut your old chums, and begun to hold forth on Kennington Common, where you were driving poor sinners from the Devil faster than drovers ever hurried their sheep into Smithfield. I swore it was all a lie, and am glad to see you tol-ol once more, and not above looking in among your old friends. And how are you, my old cock-of-the walk, after all, eh? —and what do you mean to stand?" added he, striking Hopkins playfully on the back.

"I'll stand whatever you like to call for," replied Hopkins, without evincing any feeling of pleasure at the recognition. "But I must not stay long, for I promised to return home early to supper; and Dick," added he, with a look of deep meaning at his companion, "I intend keeping my word."

"So you shall, my boy," answered Dick. "Landlord, just make me a shilling's worth of hot brandy-and-water, while I go out and get a cigar. Yours are so strong I cannot smoke them. I will not be more than a minute, Hopkins, before I return. Then I'll walk part of the way home with you, if you'll accept of my company."

Hopkins promised to wait a few minutes, and entered into conversation with the landlord at the bar, until his companion again returned. Dick had not drank up his brandy-and-water, when two men entered, who seemed as intimately acquainted with Hopkins as himself, and who were also invited to drink.

"I was just talking about you, Bill," said Dick; "and telling Hopkins what you said about his having turned parson. Parson, indeed! I would bet glasses round that he can turn up Jack as well as ever he did; and hold more honours than us all put together."

"I'll bet glasses round I do when I try again," answered Hopkins; "and that will not be for many a long day to come."

"Well, well, its no use standing here chaffing," replied Bill. "If I am to have anything to drink, I must have a pipe with it! so I shall go and sit down in our old snuggery. D—n the cards! I wish I had never known how to play one! they never brought me any good. Come, Hopkins, let 's blow a cloud together for half-an-hour or so; and by that time my supper will be ready."

Not caring to break with his companions all at once, Hopkins entered

the back-parlour with them,—a room in which he had won and lost scores of pounds. There stood the cribbage-board on the mantel-piece; beside it lay the cards; the gas was burning as of old; the splints, the pipes, &c., were all arranged in order; and they sat down, to smoke, and drink, and talk about old times. Many were the persuasions of his companions to induce him to play, were it only a single hand, at all fours, just for the last time. "I would give a guinea," said Bill, "for one more turn with you at four-handed whist!—though d—n me, if I would play for a single farthing. I never saw a man guide that game like you, Hopkins."

Hopkins held out for a long time; but flattery at length overcame all his good resolutions, and to oblige them, he consented to play a single game of whist. It was to be for parting glasses all round; but not for money.

The sequel is soon told—one glass gave rise to another; from drink they got to betting, until, about the hour of midnight, Hopkins found himself without a shilling. Dick, who was Hopkins' partner, swore that they had not had fair play: Bill and his companion, Sam, declared they had, but offered to take them home, providing they would go; and, after having treated them to a beef-steak supper, play it out until daylight. Dick whispered Hopkins, that he had got plenty of money, and would accompany them, and see it out, adding, by way of encouragement, "You know, old fellow, luck was never against us long." After much persuasion, and more drink, Hopkins consented to go for an hour or two, as it was all in his way home; for Bill had removed to fresh lodgings over the water.

There was a pride about Hopkins, which overcame all his better resolutions; he could not bear the thoughts of being beaten, even at cards, by those whom he had so often triumphed over; and added to this, his old passion for play had returned in its full force; though, half-drunk as he was, he resolved after that night, he would never play again, but let the consequence then be what it might, he would 'see it out.' This may seem a strange feeling which we are attempting to shadow forth, and will perhaps be best illustrated by comparing it to the last 'drunken bout' a man indulges in, who has resolved, on the next day, to join the 'Teetotallers;' so as a wind-up, 'goes the whole hog.' If, as it is said, 'the floor of hell is paved with good intentions, assuredly it is no crime to envy the devil the possession of such 'excellent materials,' nor to regret that they were not turned to a better use.—may the foundation soon over-top the roof!

Stretching from St. George's Church in the borough, into the high road which leads to the cast-iron bridge of Southwark, there are no end of narrow courts and dilapidated houses, which even a bold-hearted man would hesitate to thread after night-fall. Here stand scores of houses, which are uninhabited, unroofed, and in ruins; years ago it was resolved to pull them down, and build up a wide open street; years may yet pass away before this intention is fulfilled. There is no place like this in the neighbourhood of London,—no spot that looks so murderous, so melancholy, and so miserable. Many of these houses are very large, and very old; many of these courts stand just as they were when Cromwell sent out his spies to hunt up the Cavaliers, and they in return again, after the Restoration, threaded their way through them, with sword and pistol in hand, to drag forth the fallen Round-Heads. There is a smell of past ages about these places, not unlike that which arises from the decay of old coffins, and moth-eaten velvets,—as if the old winds which blew up them in the time of the civil wars, had remained there, and stagnated, amid the smells of murder, rapine, and ruin. The place looks as if its foundations were built upon old human bones, some of which had been used in rearing up the walls that are around it; so bleached, marrowless, and dead, look the naked timbers which peep through the fallen brick-work. Many of these houses contain large hollow-sounding decayed staircases, which lead into huge ruinous rooms, that now only echo to the shriekings of big black-eyed rats, which eat through the carved ceilings and the oaken floors, and live for years, and grow grey, without being once startled by a human voice; the flapping of the old wainscot, the chattering of the decayed windows, and grating of the massive rusty hinges, which a single nail now holds to the ponderous worm-eaten door, are all the sounds they hear on a windy night to alarm them; so they run and shriek on, uninjured. And the poor ignorant inhabitants who live around, believe that all these large desolate houses are haunted, and that the sounds they hear on a windy and tempestuous night, are raised by the ghosts of the departed; and sometimes they fancy they see lights flitting from room to room; men in armour, and women in white garments with their hair hanging loose, carrying torches in their hands; and ever as the wind rings out aloud, they hear funeral chaunts, and mournful requiems, and all the solemn sounds of departed devilry,—minglements of lewd songs, holy hymns, pistol-shots, and dying groans, swelling into curses, shrieks, and oaths, that make the very flesh creep,—then vanish to the chaunt of solemn music, not unlike that which follows the falling

of the curtain at a theatre after a tragedy. And many a deed, if tradition rumours aright, has been perpetrated in these decayed and desolate buildings, which has been attributed to supernatural hands; many a shriek has died away upon the surrounding silence, for no one had courage enough to venture forth to see from whence it came; and so years have gathered over this gloomy spot, blackening the steep roofs, and leaving them in all the decay and solitude of silence and neglect. Some of them have slumbered in Chancery, until the very moths have eaten away the names of the original possessors,—until the title-deeds can no longer be deciphered; for there is now no living being to be found, either to claim the titles, or pay the costs.

Into this forbidding neighbourhood, through innumerable dark turnings, Hopkins followed his companions to play out the long-contested game of whist. The house into which they entered was large, old, and ruinous. The front door stood wide open; and as there was no light in the passage, they blundered upstairs in the best manner they could. Bill, however, warning them from time to time to keep on the wall-side, as there were several large holes on the staircase, into which they might slip their legs, much easier than they would get them out. Dick came up the last, he having lingered behind to secure the outer door. To the left, the wide landing-place opened into a large old-fashioned room, at the end of which a fire was still burning, though now barely emitting light enough to reveal the figure of some one seated asleep beside the hearth.

"Come, old girl, stir your stumps, and get a light," said Bill, arousing the old woman from her seat. "I wonder you are not afraid of the devil fetching you while you are sitting all alone in the dark! Get a light, and let us have some supper as quick as you can. You'll sit here until you are 'sinew-grown!'"

"Hey!" said the old woman, grumbling as she arose, and with difficulty lit the candle at the fire,—"it's get me this, and get me that now; and run here, and run there, as if I were a dog, only born to fetch and carry. Your father treated me very differently, Bill; but woe to the day I ever knew him!"

"Did you ever hear such a grumbling old thief?" replied Bill, turning round to his companions as he spoke. "But all old mother-in-laws are alike. I am afraid I shall have to send her to the workhouse after all, for she gets too lazy to live. Look here," added he, pointing to a large oak table thickly covered with dust; "we might keep count a whole night long of our game, without once using chalk, by

only scoring the marks with our fingers on the dust. She's a dirty old —— ! But what say you to a drop of gin neat, after our walk?" continued he, approaching an old-fashioned buffet, and reaching out a black bottle and glass.

Hopkins stood beside the table, while his companions approached the cupboard, with their backs towards him, as they drank off the proffered glass; when the old woman, who held the candle in one hand, and a duster in the other, lifted up her dim, grey, deep-sunken eyes, and looking fixedly at Hopkins, pressed the tip of her long bony finger to her skinny lips. Then setting down the candlestick, traced with her finger on the dust of the table the word 'Beware!' and in an instant obliterated every mark with the cloth, as she wiped off the dust.

Hopkins was at a loss to comprehend the old woman's meaning; when she made him another sign, by raising her hand to her lips as if in the act of drinking, shaking her head, and throwing the duster upon the floor. "She means I must not drink!" thought Hopkins to himself, who was already a little sobered; "I will take her advice."

Hopkins was no stranger to the old woman, and had on several occasions taken her part, when her son-in-law had quarrelled with her in his drink.

"Come, old fellow," said Bill, holding out the glass of gin, and offering it to Hopkins; "you seem as dull as the devil at his devotions! Drink, man, and look lively, here, toss it off."

But Hopkins declined, said it was growing late, and he must think about going home; and that he would come some other night, and play out the game.

"Nonsense!" replied Bill; "you do not mean going home until we have had supper, and played another hand or two?"

"If he does," added Dick, "I wonder what the devil he ever came for! Come, old girl, throw on the steak Bill promised us. He none means going."

Hopkins again pleaded the lateness of the hour,—said that he had no appetite for supper; and was making towards the door, as if he intended going home, when the old woman (who saw by the glances exchanged between her son-in-law and his two companions, that they meditated mischief,) stepped forward with a bundle of wood in her hand, and entreated Hopkins to stay, promising that the steak should be ready in a few minutes.

Hopkins was now well aware that his companions had some design

upon him; and as the old woman made him a sign to be seated, he obeyed her.

Wood was now piled on the fire—the gridiron dragged out from among the coals, covered with dirt as it was, and the steak thrown upon it. The old woman tnen handed out the plates, placed them upon the table, and put a huge blue cracked dish before the fire ready for the steak. Then reaching a large jug from the cupboard, said, "You will want some beer, I reckon. I had better fetch it before it gets too late, as they may be shut in."

"I care nothing about beer myself," said Bill; "do you, Dick? Hopkins, I know, would prefer a glass of gin-and-water!"

"Then I must fetch in some more gin," continued the old woman; "for the bottle is nearly empty."

"No! I dare not trust you out at this hour," answered her son-in-law; "somebody or another might run away with you."

"I will go with her, and see her safe back," said Hopkins.

Bill gave him a look of deep meaning, and said, "You have grown dev'lish kind to the old woman all at once. Many thanks to you—I will go myself."

"Then I shall go, too," replied the old woman; then added, in a tone of more authority, "Bill, beware how you cross me! I know why you wish to keep me in-doors to-night!"

The three men again exchanged glances with each other; and Dick at last remembered that there was a large stone bottle of rum in the cellar, which he fetched up-stairs, while Bill ordered his mother-in-law off to bed. The old woman obeyed; but before her departure she called Bill to the door, and whispered something to him, to which he replied, "All nonsense! you'll see in the morning." She then made answer aloud, and said, "Remember, I shall be within hearing!" and closed the door.

When she had gone, Bill said, "Draw up! we shall have our supper in peace now—the old devil is as suspicious as hell itself."

"I will stay no longer!" said Hopkins, rising angrily from his seat; "it is now late, and time I was at home."

"You are not going home, yet," replied Bill; "don't think, old fellow, we shall let you sneak off when you like—no! no!—You must have a little consideration for your old friends!"

"You shall not dictate to me when I shall go!" answered Hopkins "What right have you to keep me here against my will?"

"As to right!" answered Bill, rising up, and locking the door, and

putting the key into his pocket—"As to right! —— why you may go, if you can get out."

"If you mean that!" said Hopkins, seizing the poker in an instant, "I must try for it!—Unlock the door, or in another moment, I will fell you to the floor!"

There was something startling in the appearance of Hopkins, as he stood with the heavy poker clutched in his hand, his finger pointed towards the door, his brow furrowed, and his chest thrown out, which caused his companions to quail before him, as they looked from one to another; and it was not until Bill had opened the door, and declared he was but jesting, that Hopkins altered his defensive position and at the solicitation of Dick, put down the poker, and shook hands with them.

"D—n it!" said Bill, "you get as touchy as a Scotch-terrier! If one but speaks a word, you bristle up and show your teeth in an instant! I don't know what's possessed you of late;—you used to be the first to propose sitting down to a quiet game at cards, and the last to get up. Come, come, it's a folly for old friends to quarrel for nothing."

Hopkins at length sat down; and, in an instant, was seized by Sam and Dick, and by the aid of Bill, bound fast to the chairs.

"We shall be able to cry quits with you, now," said Bill, as he bound a thick handkerchief over his arms, while his ruffianly companions held him; "and we'll know how you came to set up in yon fine house in Lock's-fields, before we have done with you! You 've been dev'lish sly, old fellow—but we have you at last! Dick, he's all safe now!"

Secured hand and foot, Hopkins sat in sullen silence, nor once replied to the jeers of his assailants, as they ate their supper, and from time to time drank his health,—now offering him a morsel to eat, then touching his lips with the glass, and again withdrawing it; until, by degrees, they got drunk, and began to quarrel amongst themselves.

"He shall drink!" said Dick, approaching with a large glass of rum-and-water, and an unsteady step. "I say, Bill, you keep the secret of this affair too snug to yourself. Here am I set to watch him from day to day, and you keep telling me it's all right, and we shall roll in money, and such like, but the devil of a farthing have I ever seen, saving one five-pound note, and that you won from me again before morning. Here Hopkins, drink, old fellow:—d—n you! I'll stick to

you, yet! Honour among thieves, I say!—I'll know more about this, or you shall be free before morning."

"Unloose me," said Hopkins, "and it shall be the best day's work you ever did! I know the cause of all this!"

"Leave him alone, and don't be a fool!" said Bill, "or it may be worse for you. Bring the rum bottle, and the pipes, and glasses into another room, then I will explain more to you. You don't know what a prize we have got!" Then turning to Hopkins, as he took up the candle, he said, "Good night,—and pleasant dreams to you!" and locking the door, he left the prisoner in darkness.

Hopkins sat alone, and heard their voices rise and fall as they conversed together in an adjoining room;—heard them laughing at one moment, then in high dispute at the next; sometimes he caught the sounds of a song, then of a deep and awful oath; until drink at last overpowered them, and all around was silent. Then his thoughts reverted to himself—to what he had done in his life-time—to the danger of his present situation; and he doubted not but that Squire Ingledew was at the bottom of it—that they intended to murder him; and he knew how unfitted he was to die—knew that he deserved all which had befallen him. "Had I but kept my good resolutions," murmured Hopkins to himself, "I should not now have been here." Then his mind became excited; he felt afraid—fancied he heard the footsteps of his murderers approaching; and at last he prayed to Heaven to forgive him his sins. The tears rolled down his dark furrowed cheeks, and he attempted in vain to uplift his hand and wipe them away: he had forgotten, whilst he prayed, that he was bound, and a prisoner. But we must leave him alone amid the darkness and the silence, and turn to other scenes in our story.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

HOW GODFREY MALVERN CONSOLED HIMSELF DURING THE ABSENCE OF EMMA.—A QUEER CHAPTER FOR THIS CIVILIZED AGE, WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, AND WILL BE FOUND TRUE TO NATURE, A HUNDRED YEARS HENCE.

GODFREY MALVERN was naturally very kind-hearted; so much so, that he had many a time given away the last shilling he possessed

in the world, and been put to his shifts the same day to raise the means to 'carry on' until the morrow. No poor author, however humble his station or talent might be, had to ask twice to borrow a sovereign, while Godfrey had one in his pocket; and sometimes Mr. Smith and Tom Grinder were a long time before they returned the loan. With such feelings, the reader will readily guess, how eagerly he sympathised with poor Mrs. Hopkins, and the pains he took to ascertain what had befallen her husband. He spent days in anxious and fruitless enquiries; and this excitement did much towards turning his thoughts from the absence of Emma. Tom Grinder went with him into all kinds of holes and corners to hunt for Hopkins: policemen were also on the look-out in every quarter, but all were of no avail. It was when he had been missing more than a week, that his wife received the following letter.

"My Dear injured Mary,

"I am alive, though in danger. Where I am, I dare not say, as it might endanger the life of one through whose kindness I am enabled to send you these few lines. Squire Ingledew, however, is the cause of my absence—of my imprisonment! This I have ascertained. Kiss my dear children, and remember me to Mr. and Mrs. Malvern. I wish I could see them. But all may yet turn out well. Remember me in your prayers. God bless you, Mary.

"Your loving husband,

"John Hopkins."

After the receipt of this letter, Godfrey began to relax in his enquiries; he did, however, write to his father-in-law, but Squire Ingledew either never received the letter, or, if he did, refused to answer it.—Godfrey ascertained that Mrs. Hopkins was not in the immediate want of money; and after this, he troubled himself as little as possible about the matter. He had now the book to write which he had bargained for with the publisher; he had also many new acquaintances to call upon since he attended Lady Smileall's *soirée*. Mr. Marall had presented him with one or two orders for the theatres. Godfrey in return had written a few articles for his paper; and he now frequently called upon Lady Smileall. Maria too was very often there, and she was always glad to see Godfrey. Whenever he came, she seemed confused; when he went away, she sighed, hung down her head, and looked sad. She was very handsome, and wrote very pretty verses.—She never showed them at first to Godfrey herself; Lady Smileall did this; and when Godfrey praised them, she would say, "It's a pity you

were ever married, Mr. Malvern! what a happy couple you would have been!—poor Maria!" And when Godfrey paid any pretty little compliment to Maria herself, she would lift up the dark lashes of her eyes, and looking at him—(such a look as would have turned the eyes of a saint earthward, in the midst of his devotions!) say, "What would your wife think, Godfrey, if she heard you?" Yes, she already called him Godfrey, and he called her Maria, the 'dark-eyed,'—the 'dark-glancing,'— the 'night-haired,'—the 'soul-searching,'—'love-looking,' —the 'Cleopatra of Marias.' And Lady Smileall termed Godfrey her Antony, then left them seated on the ottoman together for hours.—Poor dear Lady Smileall! she thought no harm; she only thought how poetical it was for two young people to be fond of each other's society, and one of them married; and whenever she spoke of them to her friends, she quoted that mischief-making line of Shakspeare's, and said,—

"The course of true-love never did run smooth;"

and as a proof of the truth of her quotation, would point to where Godfrey and Maria sat, 'her hand in his,' her eyes on him; both young, both handsome, all soul, all poetry, all intellect. She never remembered that they were man and woman, frail children of our mother Eve; she believed they were too poetical to be like other people. No! she said, "It was delightful to watch the workings of such Platonic affection, that it was the very sublimity of the triumph of soul over the body—the etherial ascendancy of spirit above matter, and the only living illustration of such a novel as she intended herself some day or another to write." She thought it too spiritual to be natural—too ideal to be real. Forgetting that there is no cant about passion—that affection, whether sincere or not, is always dangerous—that love, like hunger, though not always real, is a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Lady Smileall was a silly, empty-headed, unthinking old lady. She quoted Burns from 'hearsay,' without reading his poetry; had she but have read his works, she would have known a little more of human nature.

One evening it was arranged that a few of Lady Smileall's friends should go to the theatre together, to clap and applaud a most wretched farce which one of her pet poetlings had written. Godfrey and Maria were pressed to join the party; and, after much persuasion, accepted the invitation. It was but a 'poor house,' and our hero and the young lady had a box to themselves. That night the first piece chanced to be an old play which had not been acted for many years. It was one of

those solid old dramas written about the time of Charles the First, and was full of poetry and passion. Among many scenes of great merit, in which the characters were admirably drawn, was one that deeply interested Maria, and took so deep a hold of Godfrey's attention, that for several minutes he was unconscious of her presence. The scene depicted the struggles of a young lady to conquer her affection for the husband of another,—one who had been her friend from childhood. The wife was drawn in beautiful colours; she loved her husband, was fond of her home, but was very far beneath him in intellectual attainments. He loved the art of war, was fond of discussing the plans of battles and sieges, and had no end of drawings of fortified towns, camps, and castles. His wife loved only peace—her rival the stir and tumult of battle, for she was a hero-worshipper. Dissimilar as the subject was to the tastes of both Godfrey and Maria, the dramatist had nevertheless shadowed forth a strange resemblance to the state of feelings entertained by the latter. The heroine of the drama loved the husband for his valour, sat beside him and listened to his hair-breadth escapes. There was one soliloquy in which she gave vent to her passion so much in accordance with Maria's, that she unconsciously placed her hand on Godfrey's arm; and when he turned his head to look at her, he saw that she was in tears. As the play proceeded, and the passion more fully developed itself, she leant more heavily upon Godfrey! and long before it concluded, her head rested upon his shoulder, while his arm encircled her waist, as he drew her closely towards him, and at last imprinted a long breathless kiss, upon her burning and yielding lips. That night he accompanied Maria home, and forgot his own fond and faithful Emma,—forgot the sweet bird that was mourning and grieving because he was absent, in the solitary hall of Sutton-cum-Bottesford. And that night Emma had been sitting at her chamber-window, and looking out on the garden, even at the very spot on which she had stood when Godfrey vowed before Heaven how fondly he loved her, and wished a thousand curses might alight upon him if ever he was unfaithful. Even while she sat alone, looking out upon the still moonlight-scene, thinking only of him, and wondering what he was then doing, Maria was clasped in his arms, while her long dark hair fell loose upon his bosom.

Maria was a beautiful woman, possessing high intellectual attainments, yet proud both of her person and her talents. There was none of that retiring modesty about her character, which added so greatly to the charms of our Emma. She could talk, and talk well too, and had

made a deep impression on the hearts of several young gentlemen, who visited at Lady Smileall's. Yet, highly gifted as she was, she felt that Godfrey Malvern was by far her superior; so began by admiring the mind, and ended in loving the man. Godfrey, also, took no small pains to render himself agreeable to her, for her manners were very fascinating. Her voice was remarkably soft and sweet; and when she spoke, she revealed a set of teeth which might have matched with the whitest ivory, and she knew the impression she made on the listener. Emma's voice was a perfect piece of music, and her words sank at once into the heart; yet she was unconscious of all this, for she had never studied the art of 'display,' nor tried to 'show herself off.' If Maria dropped her bouquet, her handkerchief, or her glove, and any gentleman sitting at hand neglected to pick them up, she never failed to rebuke him for his inattention: while Emma would have stooped herself to recover such trifles, without once thinking of troubling any body; nay, have blushed to the very brow, had any stranger tendered his services. Maria, in conversing with any one, would fix her dark beautiful eyes full on the face: Emma drooped her pencilled lashes, and looked down abashed when she spoke to any other than her husband. In purity of heart and feeling, Maria was immeasurably below Emma. Maria was like a dashing rapid stream covered with beautiful foam-bells, and laced with silver ripples, that went singing and rolling between its banks, and arrested the attention of every passer by. Emma, like a gentle brook, reflecting the sky and the flowers, and revealing every pebble that slept in its clear depths, stealing slumberously and almost noiselessly along, as if it sung only to itself, and the few sweet flowers that hung down to kiss its unruffled surface. Love in the heart of Maria raged like an awful volcano, too fierce and too terrible to last long; while in the heart of Emma it burnt with a slow and steady blaze; the winds might blow, or the rains descend, still the same constant flame was there, burning upward, brighter and brighter, through all the surrounding darkness. Yet Maria was a very beautiful woman, bold and daring in her love. She exacted no vows, none were exchanged—she thought not of Godfrey being married—she fancied that she loved him to madness, and he believed then that he had more affection for her than for Emma.

Leave we the starched and fastidious world to startle at the sentence—they fell—as thousands have done before—a prey to their own weak passions; and like Shakspeare's Isabel, in 'Measure for Measure,' they could only answer that it was 'mutual.' To paint human nature as it

is, we are compelled to use, at times, dark and unsightly colours. The trim garden is well enough for a short circumscribed walk, and a child may be trusted alone amongst its roses and lilies; but the waste common, the wild wood, and the rude natural world, contain their thorns and thistles; and those who venture abroad must expect to find many a path that differs widely from 'the smooth-shaven green.'

That night Godfrey Malvern drank deeply; for Maria looked in his face, and filled his glass,—the beautiful, the erring Maria. He was unable to walk home! and when he had discharged the cab at the door, Mrs. Hopkins was compelled to assist him upstairs. Next morning he awoke to a full consciousness of all he had done—to the maddening reflection that he was a villain! He would, when it was too late, have given worlds to have recalled that night. Alas! the Past is the forever of Eternity! the iron doors which Time closes, never again to be opened!—a million years spent in tears and prayers could never again move the 'harsh-grating thunder' of those iron hinges, for tears but turn to rust, and fetter the past for ever! He had fallen from his 'high estate,' and he hated himself.

Oh, misery! that very morning Godfrey received a letter from Emma. The very impress of the seal made him hate himself. The two hearts, and the simple motto, 'LOVE AND TRUTH,' made his soul quake within him. He broke the seal, then threw the letter on the table; for he dared not read it; his eye had caught the first line, and that was enough,—"My own dear husband!" The devil himself could not have added a single torture to what Godfrey Malvern that morning endured. Had Emma but then been by, and forgiven him, he would 'have sinned no more!' Maria might have been left neglected and broken-hearted.

Emma's letter had fallen beside his own manuscript. Her fine delicate handwriting lay beside his unsightly and blotted work, which was filled with erasures and corrections; while not a stain sullied her own composition, for she had written from her heart. An angel from heaven might have read her letter, and veiled his face with his wings, while he heaved a sigh, and blushed to find that there was such pure love on this gross earth. Godfrey Malvern sat with his face buried in his hand, and wept like a repentant sinner. And while he wept, little Georgey Hopkins stole noiselessly into the room. He peeped in first and just showed his little shining head of curly flaxen hair, and his sweet innocent face; and after standing some time in silence, said, "Don't cry! pretty mammy Emma come again soon;

and my daddy bring her, and bring Georgey a horse." The child then went up and glided between Godfrey's knees, and encircled one of his fingers with his little hand. Godfrey thought that in a few more days a child as innocent might be his own, and in time it would call him 'father!' kneel down at dear Emma's feet, and pray for him; and he sobbed as if his heart would break. Then came a rush as if hell had trebled the flames of the fiery furnace, and burnt through its deepest foundations, to add one more agony to the pains of the damned! as he thought of what might befall the lost! the ruined Maria!

The man about to be hung could scarcely feel more horror, or be more repentant for the past than poor Godfrey Malvern. Could he, as a man, desert Maria? Could he, as a husband, again, look in the face of his own fond Emma? Honour and love confronted each other. Folly looked sad, while he stood a spectator of the combat, and only shook his cap and bells with the sighs he heaved.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

IN WHICH WE AGAIN RETURN TO HOPKINS, AND INTRODUCE A STRANGER, WHO DOES NOTHING MORE THAN AFFORD US AN OPPORTUNITY OF ADDING ANOTHER EVENTFUL CHAPTER TO OUR STORY.

ALTHOUGH Hopkins still remained a prisoner, he wanted for nothing in the way of good eating or drinking; but was amply supplied with everything, excepting liberty. Dick's conduct towards him evinced something approaching to kindness; and when he visited Hopkins, he generally presented him with a flask of choice spirits, or a supply of tobacco, and as he shook his hand at parting, sometimes said, "Never mind, old fellow! all will be right yet! and I will make up for all this!"

Hopkins had also learned from the old woman, that matters had not progressed according to her son-in-law's wishes; for Bill was the chief actor in the plot. That a stranger had frequently visited the house late at night, but had always been careful to conceal his features; and that he seemed only to act as an agent for some other person, whose name he refused to disclose; and the old woman went so far as to say, that should any further attempt at violence be made, she had sufficient

help at hand to protect him. More than this, Hopkins had heard from his wife, and learnt that there was nothing wanting at home, saving himself, to render his family completely happy: it was through the old woman's kindness that he both sent and received the letters.

The room in which Hopkins was secured fronted a high, dead wall; it was only by stooping down, and looking upwards, that he could catch even a glimpse of the sky. At the remote ends of this high, ancient wall, stood the backs of lofty houses; the only window along the whole length of the building, was the strong iron-bound casement which admitted the half-darkened light into the room in which he was imprisoned; all beside was brick-work from ground to roof; from the foundation stone to the coping of the wall, stretched one dull, dead, windowless pile of black, damp, moss-grown brick-wall,—a 'twitchell,' dark, dreary, and untrodden, without entry or outlet,—a huge oblong-square well above ground,—a place where a man might have been kept for years, and left to walk up and down at his pleasure, to call for aid, until he shrieked himself hoarse, yet have been heard no more than if he had called from a grave ten feet below the daisies that grew over it. It was a horrible prospect! When Hopkins looked down, he saw only broken tiles which had been blown from the lofty tops of the ruinous houses, the skeletons of bats which had dropped from their nests under the eaves, or the half-putrid remains of some cat which had tumbled 'squelch' from the roof, and wandered up and down in that dreary, high, and narrow 'twitchell,' until it had grown gaunt as a ghost, then lain down and died among the bones of rats, and young half-fledged birds, broken tiles, and pieces of decayed timber, over which the black moss, and grave-smelling fungi had grown.

In this dismal den, Hopkins remained day and night, sometimes visited by Dick, but more frequently by the old woman. "I would liberate you," said the old mother-in-law, one day, to the prisoner, "were it not for the fear that Bill would murder me the moment he came home and missed you. I have had one narrow escape: the knife just missed my heart, and that was all. He struck at me in his drink. It was two years ago." And the old woman took the handkerchief from her neck, bared her brown haggard bosom, and shewed Hopkins the hideous scar which had cicatrized over the wound, and left a ghastly seam, like a white deadly gate at which Death had battered, been repulsed, and driven off without his prey. "I have hated him ever since he did it!" added the old woman; "and should sleep all the sounder in my coffin, if I saw him hung before I died!"

One evening Bill had returned home rather late, accompanied by his two companions, Dark Dick, and Sam Star-light, for such were the cognomens used when amongst themselves. They were far from being sober when they entered the room; and from the manner in which they conducted themselves towards each other, they were evidently any thing but friends.

"It is not the thing!" said Bill, reaching out the gin-bottle and glass, and striking his fist upon the table, as he emptied the tumbler of neat spirits, then pushed the bottle towards Dark Dick—"It is not the thing, Dick! neither will I stand it any longer! The thief will not tell me anything, when he comes! He pulls out a thundering thick check-book, offers to sign for so much, and so much; but we are neither to know whom we receive the money from, nor what the work is done for. We are to murder Hopkins, bury him, and draw the tin! I don't like this d—d mystery!"

"No more do I, Bill!" replied Dark Dick; "and had you not been so dev'lish close, I would have managed things better than you have done."

"You had always a good conceit of yourself!" answered Bill; "and thought you could do things better than other people. Now, in the name of the devil, what would you do with a fellow who comes buttoned up to the eyes,—who will neither tell you who he is, nor whom he comes from?—who pulls out a blank check-book, and only wishes to see the man dead, then is ready to sign a check for five-hundred pounds, or bring the money in hard gold, and pay it down at once, as soon as the deed is done? What have we, who are sworn to do the work, to do with the secret? I have no ill feeling against Jack Hopkins! but I like five-hundred pounds better than I do him! and if you, in your great wisdom, can tell me how I can get such a sum, and yet leave Jack alive and well, why, d—n me, I'll do it at once, and set him free, and leave him, if he can, to live as long as old Methuselah!"

Dark Dick bit his nails and remained silent, until Sam spoke out, and said, "The next time this fellow comes with his thick check-book, let us seize him, and put him in the place of Hopkins, until he has signed, and we drawn for such a sum as we may require! I would make one to murder the devil for money, if we could not obtain it otherwise! but, b—t me! I would leave the old man to deal out his brimstone and treacle, unmolested, if I could but get hold of the tin!"

"I drink to you, Sam!" replied Dark Dick, emptying the glass at a draught. "The next time this chap comes, we will seize upon him! It is a good thought, old fellow!—and we will carry it out!"

"But I have promised," said Bill, striking his fist upon the table, "that he shall come and go, without either question being asked, or force used; and I will keep my promise, d—n me!"

"You may keep what the devil you like!" answered Sam; "I have made no such promise,—neither has Dick! You ought to have consulted us first. What I swear to, I will do!—and nothing more!"

"Neither have I," added Dark Dick; "you take too much upon yourself, Bill, because you have got possession of this old house. I have helped to turn up many a skeleton in my day, when I was grave-digger, and have sold them for a bottle of gin a-piece, and felt but little regret after it. But look you, old fellow! it is another affair to knock the life and soul out of a poor devil for a sum of money, when it can be obtained without all this—especially one whom we have been hail-fellow-well-met with, the same as we have with Jack. D—n me, I would sooner strike a blow for him than against him; we have kept him shut up long enough for nothing, and it would only be turning the tables as we ought to do, to put this thief in his place."

"Swear he is murdered, and see what that will do," said Sam.— "Tell him how the deed was done and such like, and see how he stands that;—anything to get the tin."

"Well, well, as you like," replied Bill, knitting his bushy brows, "I never thought of this before; but I'll try him on, trust me, when he comes. But, hark you! my fine fellows, it's just upon one o'clock, and he's promised to be here at that hour. If we are to grab him, hide yourselves until he comes; and if you think Jack Hopkins will forgive us, providing we let him go shares, why, have at the thief! When you hear me whistle, pop out and seize him. Now hide yourself in the large closet the moment you hear him knock."

Bill had scarcely concluded, when a knock was heard at the door without. It was a solemn single knock, one which echoed through every avenue of that old dilapidated mansion—a knock which startled even the very rats! It awoke Hopkins as he lay asleep on his flock-bed, dreaming that he was presenting his forged check at the bank in Lombard-street, when Godfrey Malvern entered the doorway, and seized him by the collar. Hopkins sat bolt upright, with his clothes on, when he was awakened by that solitary knock, and looked bewildered around his dark lonely room, as if he expected that his last hour was come, and he was about to be suddenly summoned forth to answer for all his past deeds!

Bill descended the ruinous staircase with a candle in his hand, and a

short pipe in his mouth; and when he had unbolted the massive door, and admitted the stranger, said, "I hope you'll be better satisfied before you go out again. I should be very sorry for there to be any misunderstanding between us."

"Is he dead?" enquired the stranger, making a full pause, while only half-way up the staircase.

"Mind that dark hole on the right-hand," replied Bill, holding down the light as he spoke. "They say there's a deep well under the staircase; and that they have tried the longest line they could buy, without finding any bottom to it. It would only be a doley place for a poor devil to tumble into without any company. They do say that when that well was cleaned out, a lot of curious things were dug up and preserved in one of these rooms until very lately; but somebody or another's taken them away, I dare say, years ago. An old woman died the other day,—she was about ninety-eight, and she says her grandmother remembered the skeleton-room, as they called it, which contained many curious nicknacks that had been dug up in former times out of this old well. There was something they called a mammoth's tooth, and which, I dare say, was only the grinder of some giant, murdered many years ago, when giants lived in this neighbourhood, before king Arthur knocked their brains out, when he went round to collect taxes.—This is capital gin; will you take a drop neat?" added he, holding out the glass. Then adding, while he looked up at the carved ceiling, black with the smoke of three centuries, "They must have been biggish chaps that built such lofty rooms as these!"

"The house is very old," answered the stranger, putting back the glass without tasting it, and surveying the carved ceiling as he spoke,—"very old, indeed; and he must be a courageous man who dare venture into it, without being well armed."

"To come into it is nothing," replied Bill; "but to live here, amid the groans of a gross of ghosts, who nightly give us a serenade—who come marching in mail-armour, and shrieking in silk dresses, accompanied by a chorus of rats, that have eaten up the ribs of every skeleton. It is this which requires the most nerve!"

"No doubt, no doubt," said the stranger impatiently; "but to business; is this fellow put out of the way?"

"He is," answered Bill. "Have you brought the money you promised?"

"We will talk about that," rejoined the man; "let me see the body first."

"The body, indeed!" replied Bill; "if you have a mind to take the candle, and go down into the cellar by yourself, why, go; it's about an hundred steps to the bottom. But mind the rats don't fly at you, and knock your light out. I dare say you'll find some scores of them busy enough by this time. For my part, I have no wish to look at him again. Dare you go by yourself?"

"I dare!" answered the stranger, drawing a pistol from his side-pocket as he spoke, and placing it on full-cock. Then taking up the candle.

"A candle will not keep in," said Bill; "it is so precious cold at the bottom, that the fat sets, and the light goes out;—we haven't got a lanthorn. But why not take my word, without going at all?"

"I will take the word of no one on such a matter," answered the stranger; "nor do I believe now that he is dead! I came to-night to pay you down half the money I promised before the work was done. I think it not likely that you would put him out of the way, without having something in hand first?"

"Half the money have you?" inquired Bill; "let's see it, then!"

The stranger laid down the pistol, and thrusting a hand into each pocket, drew forth two yellow cash-bags filled with sovereigns; but before he had time to put them down, a hand was thrust from out the cupboard to which his back was turned, and the loaded pistol taken up in an instant. A moment more, and Dark Dick had hold of the stranger's collar with one hand, while with the other he held the pistol within an inch of his ear; and whispering between his clenched teeth—for Dick seemed to breathe forth the words rather than utter them—as he said, "We will now know who you are!"

Quick as thought, the stranger drew out another pistol, and was just in the act of firing it, when Bill struck it from his hand. "No doubt he has help outside," said Bill; "what shall we do?"

"Never mind, if there be an hundred outside," replied Sam; "what need we to fear? We have but to confess that he offered us money to murder a man, and that we but laid this trap to bring him to justice."

"Hark! you," said the stranger, taking out a splendid gold watch, and looking at it, "in five more minutes your door will be driven from its hinges, unless I am safely outside of it. Think not that I am fool enough to trust myself in a place like this, without preparing for the worst. There is the money; take it up, though I should like better to pour it molten down your throats. Now do what you please! Who

I am you shall never know. Four more minutes, and your door will be battered down, were it made of solid iron."

"We have his money—let him go," said Bill; "it is no use having an uproar outside at this hour."

"Let Hopkins first see him!" answered Dick, and he hurried off to fetch out the prisoner; but while he was gone, the stranger whispered something in the ear of Bill, which induced him instantly to hasten down stairs, unbolt the door, and set him at liberty, and when Dick returned with Hopkins, he was gone.

"This is not the thing," said Dick, looking angrily at Bill as he spoke. "You had no right to let him escape, without our consent, and you, Sam, ought to have prevented him from going."

"I confess I was a fool," replied Bill; "for when I had opened the door there was not a soul outside. But I will tell you all I know about him, ere long," continued Bill. He then addressed a few words in a whisper to Dick, while the latter turned round and stared at Hopkins in astonishment.

The prisoner was again led back to his room; and when the door was locked, Hopkins heard some one whisper in the dark, and say "Hush! be not alarmed!" and at the same moment, he felt a hand fall gently on his shoulder.

CHAPTER XXXV.

HOW GREGORY GRUFF FOUND GREAT COMFORT IN LONDON—MET WITH HIS WIFE, MARY, AND A "BABBY," AND OTHER PLEASANT ADVENTURES, WHICH WILL NO DOUBT PROVE AMUSING TO THE READER.

Gregory Gruff had by this time settled down comfortably in his London lodgings; but all his attempts to find out Godfrey Malvern had been fruitless. He lost himself half-a-dozen times a-day;—came home, and swore for an hour at the many turnings he met with in London;—then sallied forth again in quest of new adventures. Mrs. Gruff and Mary had also followed close at his heels, and, through the Banker, had learnt Gregory's address, on the very evening that a strange adventure befel him.

It was dark when Gregory hailed an omnibus at the West-end—en-

tered it, and was driven along in the direction of the City. It so chanced that an old acquaintance of Gruff's happened to be in the same omnibus. They soon entered into conversation, and Gregory told him where he lodged, gave him his address, and an invitation to call upon him; and was busied running on in his usual off-handed way, grumbling at the want of kindness and good feeling in the world, and regretting the unworthiness of some of the objects on which he had that day bestowed his charity, when his attention was suddenly attracted by the loud sobs of a young woman, who sat beside him with a child on her knee.

There was not a kinder-hearted man in the world than Gregory Gruff; and to see a young woman in tears, without offering her comfort, was against the nature of our friend Gregory. He spoke very kindly to her, inquired if she wanted money, or if he could in any way serve her; took out his purse, and offered her whatever she required; patted her gently on the back, and bade her not take it so to heart; insisted upon holding the child while she recovered herself; and took the little fellow on his knee, much to the amusement of all the passengers. The omnibus halted at the corner of Bouverie-street; and while the conductor was helping a gentleman to alight, the young woman sprang out, turned the corner of the street, and ran out of sight in an instant. The conductor held open the door for a minute, as if he expected her to return; then, closing it with a loud bang said—"All's right! she's bolted, and left an old gentleman the kid to keep, and her fare to pay."

The rumbling of the wheels, the squalling of the child, and the laughter of the passengers, drowned for a few seconds the deep swearing of Gregory.

Gruff soon succeeded in stopping the omnibus, and jumped out with the child in his arms, followed by his friend. He gave the conductor a smart blow on the chest for his insolence, refused to pay his fare unless he found the young woman; and would have succeeded in collecting a large crowd together if the man had not again called out, "All right!"—and putting himself in a position very unlike anything yet found amongst the ancient statues, with one leg lifted up and thrust forward, his thumb touching the tip of his nose, and his four fingers expanded, he exclaimed, as the omnibus went thundering up Ludgate-hill, "Give the kid plenty of gruel, and a little cordial when he's cross; and don't bring him up to drink gin, nor to be such a precious old blackguard as yourself!"

"Pray remember the poor sweeper!" said the man who swept the crossing, and followed Gruff with his hat in his hand.

"Go to the devil!" exclaimed Gregory, rushing across the road with the child in his arms.

"Do you want anybody to carry the babby, sir?" continued the man, laughing as he commenced using his broom before turning to the next passenger.

Gruff had taken apartments in Finsbury-square, and home he hastened with the child; now trying to still its cries, then uttering a round English oath, a minglement of "hush! hush!"—then a volley of curses, the perspiration all the while streaming from his forehead. When he reached home,—horror of horrors! who should be seated in his apartment but Mrs. Gruff, and Mary.

"Gracious goodness!" exclaimed Mary, lifting up her hands and eyes in astonishment; "master has soon got a babby in London!"

"Oh, the villain! oh, my heart! Mary, my smelling-bottle! The nasty hussey! I'll tear her eyes out!—I knew he kept somebody! Oh! oh! oh!" and Mrs. Gruff went off as usual; her bonnet falling back, her cloak flying open, and the child bawling lustily.

"Mary, Mary! do take the child, and leave me to attend to your mistress, or I shall go mad!" said Gregory, as he stood still in the centre of the room, alternately "hush, hushing!" and damning in the same breath. Mary took the baby, and Gregory the smelling-bottle; and while he tried to bring round Mrs. Gruff, Mary endeavoured to quiet the child, blessed its pretty eyes, and said it was the very image of her master. Whereat Mrs. Gruff "oh! oh'd!" louder than ever, and Gregory swore by way of chorus.

"I never thought you could have served me so!" exclaimed Mrs. Gruff; "and to keep it secret all this time from your lawful wife,—oh! oh! oh!"

"Damnation! it only happened within this half hour," answered Gregory; "never saw her before to-night in all my life."

"Never saw a sweeter child of its age!" echoed Mary; "it's got master's nose and mouth to a T! 'Hey diddle, diddle!' Look, how good it is now, ma'am! But where's its mammy?"

"Don't let the horrible woman enter the room,' said Mrs. Gruff; "I know I should do something dreadful if she did. Oh! to think I should have to endure this to my face!"

"Upon my honour, Margaret, I never saw the child before to-night," answered Gregory, thrusting the smelling-bottle into her

mouth in mistake; "I wish the devil had had me when I met either its mother, or the omnibus!"

"Don't say so, after all the poor creature's endured for you!" replied Mary, sticking up for her sex. "It's very cruel, and very wicked; and I'm sure Missus will look over it, as it's your first offence! Do but peep at its innocent face, ma'am! Isn't it the very moral of master! 'Hey diddle, diddle, gumpity gump!'"

"Oh! oh! will you break my heart!" said Mrs. Gruff; "and yet, Mary—if I am to be a mother to it—and—oh! my heart—if he'll promise me, on his bended knees—(it will break! oh! oh!)—never to see her again, never to bring her into my presence,—but order her to leave the house this very night,—why, I'll, I'll be—oh! oh! the sweet lamb! How can I but love it? when it's so like him—him, whom I—. Let me kiss, kiss its little —! Oh! oh! Mary."

Gruff stamped, swore, frowned, perspired, and went up and down the room like a madman, while his wife smothered the child with kisses, and kept exclaiming, "Oh! how like him it is!"

It was all in vain that Gregory pleaded, raged, reasoned, and attested his innocence. Mrs. Gruff understood good generalship too well to give up so advantageous a position as chance had at last assigned her; so determined to make her husband believe that she thought the child was his.

"I know I deceived you, Mr. Gruff," continued his affectionate spouse, when she had somewhat recovered herself; and rocking the child as she spoke; "but it was only pure love that caused me to do so, for I saw what a gratification it would be to you to have a son of your own. But I've been justly punished, although if I had but known that the many times you went to Buttervote was to visit this bad woman, before you had her removed to London, I would have burnt the house down over her head,—aye, if you'd been within it! Yes, Gregory, much as I love you, I would have done it; although I know I should have leaped into the flames the next minute to have saved you."

"That I'm sure you would, ma'am," echoed Mary; "same as the Hindoo widows do, that we read about in the penny tracts; and sometimes you know, ma'am, that there are many wives there to one husband, but I don't believe master will ever do so again."

"I declare, madam, you'll drive me stark, staring mad!" replied Gregory, stamping his foot on the floor as he spoke.—"I tell you, again, that I never knew any woman, either at Buttervote or elsewhere!

That I chanced to-night to get into an omnibus, (I wish I had fallen into a sewer instead) saw a young woman crying, and took up the child to hold until she recovered herself, and that the instant the door was open, the woman darted out, struck down a street, and left me with the child. Mr. Vickers, who came with me to the door, can swear that what I say is the truth."

"I know that there are plenty of people to be found, who are ready to swear anything!" answered Mrs. Gruff; "but I don't wish you to run yourself into any more sin than you have done. Even if what you say were the truth, what right have you, a married man, to get into an omnibus, or anything else, with any lady? Besides, you don't think that I'm going to believe that you would take her child, and nurse it, and comfort her, without you had been very, very intimate indeed with her. I know it's more than you would do for your own lawful wife; for many a-time have you left me, crying, and fainting, and gone and locked yourself up in your study; and more than that, Mr. Gruff, the child's the very image of you—besides, you would never have brought it home, if it hadn't been your own! But I've forgiven you, on condition that you never do so again, and will promise never more to allude to the subject,—however painful the thoughts of it must be to the feelings of a fond and affectionate wife, one, who never did anything but study her husband's happiness, even to —— oh! oh! oh!"—— And Mrs. Gruff hugged the baby to her bosom, while, with great effort, she forced a tear from each eye; then, without much trouble, gave vent to half-a-dozen respectable sobs. Gregory stood like a stag at bay, as if he were at a loss what course to turn next, and undecided whether he should kick out Mrs. Gruff, Mary, or the babby.

"How can you stand so," chimed in Mary, "when you see Missus endures it like a patient lamb, and takes to the child just as if it were her own? Oh, the hard-heartedness of men! Do take hold of her hand. I'm sure she's the most forgiving and the sweetest-dispositioned woman in the world!—Only think how she's promised never to allude to the subject again!—many women would have torn your eyes out long before this!—Oh, what it is to be an angel! For my part, if it were me, I'm sure my nails would fly clean off, but what they would have been at you before this! But I must see about getting some milk for little master, and a few tops-and-bottoms. And I'm sure Missus must want a little brandy-and-water to cheer her up a bit, poor dear lady! I wonder how she's stood what she has, without sinking into the

earth! Hush! hush! hush!—Mary get little Greggy some milk soon—don't cry:—

> 'Bee babby bunting, Daddy's gone a-hunting,
> To fetch a little lambskin, to wrap little Gregory in.'"

So Mary continued to sympathise and sing,—now comforting her mistress, then reproaching Gregory for his unkindness, and anon addressing a few words, or chaunting some old nursery rhyme to the child, while she was engaged in preparing its supper; and then Mrs. Gruff and her servant did all but quarrel about which should feed it, and Mary said she was sure it would turn out an astrologer, its eyes looked so much like stars.

Meantime Gregory Gruff had thrown himself into a chair—he knew not what to do! Had a coach at that moment been passing by, that could have carried him into the very heart of the deserts of Africa, he would have gone by it: he was, to quote the words of a very popular parody—

> "Sated with home, of wife, and children tired."

At length he broke out into a bitter phillipic about the want of feeling in women,—compared them to the ostrich that leaves her eggs in the sand—to every beast, bird, or fish, that destroys its young. Began with poor mother Eve in Eden, and descended down to the last police-report, in which he had read of a woman leaving her husband and six children, and running off with an apprentice to America,—until he all but made it out, that women were only born to bring trouble to men. Then he remembered himself, and said that he never knew but one thoroughly good, and that was Emma Ingledew.

"And she's left her husband to starve in London somewhere!" added the malicious Mrs. Gruff; "and gone down in the country again, and is now living my-lady's-life in the hall of Sutton-cum-Bottesford! She came only two or three days before we left."

"Then I will book myself for Greenland in the next whaler that goes out!" exclaimed Gregory; "build myself a hut, and live like an Esquimaux!"

"You'll never be such a bear," replied Mrs. Gruff, "as to leave your wife, and this poor innocent child!"

Mary was about to add something, when a man threw open the door, and insisted upon knowing what Mr. Gruff meant by entering his bed-room, while he was out the other night

Gregory explained the mistake; and as the gentleman's sleeping

apartment was on the same floor as that which Gruff occupied, nothing was easier—he had entered the wrong room, and caused no small alarm to the lady, who was in bed; and from the gentlemanly manner of Gruff, and the sincerity with which he apologized, the lodger went away perfectly satisfied with the truth of what he had asserted, and quite certain that it was only a mistake. But scarcely had the door closed. before his loving wife again broke out.

"I haven't come to London, before it was time!" said Mrs. Gruff; "a pretty life you have been leading! Oh, that ever I should have married such a wickedly-disposed man! You'll be quite a town's-talk, that you will!"

"It's quite dangerous to live with such a character!" added Mary; "but I never go to bed without locking my door! But, lord! he looks like it!"

"And a man of his years, too!" said Mrs. Gruff; "oh! it's scandalous!—what a wicked world we live in, Mary!—he'll compel me to retire to some nunnery! He ought to stand in the church in a white sheet, as they did in the good old times, when the law had some respect for the injuries done to a lawful wife. A mistake, indeed!—the child was a mistake, too, if he's to be believed!"

"Ten thousand million wagon loads of devils!" exclaimed Gregory, kicking over the table, and upsetting the baby's supper. "I can stand it no longer!—D—n it, I am not a Tarquin! I never did any injury to a human soul in all my life! You'll drive me either to drink or something more desperate!—Damnation!" And Gregory rushed up-stairs to bed, followed by Mrs. Gruff, with the child in her arms; the latter screeching and bawling, as if he had borrowed somebody's voice only to try it; and the other calling out, "Oh!—my husband!—Hush baby!—hush! hush!"

"Marry come up, here's a pretty to do!" said Mary, when left to herself, to pick up the scattered fragments, and replace the table.—"I'm sure this babby's quite a god-send! for missus hardly knew how to face master again, after he had found her out about the padding. Poor old man!—the child's no more his, than I am!—but, Lord! when we live with such a couple of old fools, we must humour them! It's our duty to be blind, at times, as my mother used to say when father got drunk on a Sunday, and talked about the excellent sermon he had heard that evening at church."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A DULL, HEAVY, LONG, AND TEDIOUS CHAPTER, WHICH MAY BE SAFELY READ BY THOSE WHO GO TO CHURCH, SHEWING HOW GUILT IS ITS OWN AVENGER, AND ENDING BOOK THE FIRST OF GODFREY MALVERN.

TURN we now to the Hall of Sutton-cum-Bottesford—to the fond, affectionate, and deeply-injured Emma, the beautiful wife, now a mother, with a sweet baby sleeping at her breast, yet no husband near to comfort her. Godfrey had written to her several times; but, oh! how different is guilt from pure love! His letters were no longer like what they had been; there was none of that gushing and overflowing of the heart, no homely expressions, no fond, endearing thoughts which recalled happy moments they had spent together,—hours when he dandled with her ringlets, and hung upon her lips, while love was delirious with delight. Emma felt that there was something wanting; he did not tell her how he thought of her of a-night, as she did of him,—did not recount what he had been doing, or was doing when he received her letter, as she did,—made no mention what he thought of when he first awoke in a morning, sat down alone to his meals, or beside the hearth in the twilight, or kept count of the hours, by recalling how they had passed them when together; and she felt that all was not right,—that there was a great vacancy which ought to have been filled up by herself. No; Godfrey scarcely alluded to the past, for the form of Maria threw a dark shadow over it; and as for the present, her image seemed to stand ever before him; and when his heart yearned towards Emma, his conscience smote him, while a cloud passed over his mind, as his hand shook, and refused to become the recorder of false feelings and empty words, which now only hung with shaken fibres and torn-up roots about the heart, and no longer struck firmly and deeply into the core. Emma, on the other hand, approached nearer as he receded; the holy well-spring of her heart tossed up its love as a pure fountain does its water, but the bright silvery arch fell, broken, upon a dark, unsightly mass, so incrusted with slime, and hideous creeping things, that only clung closer, and grew more solidly together, lest so pure a torrent should wash them wholly away.

The more Emma unveiled her fond and affectionate heart, the more hideous did Godfrey's appear to himself, as if every new virtue that he discovered, like a star breaking out upon a black and stormy sky, only shewed more strongly the deep darkness with which it was surrounded. The very sight of one of Emma's letters was at last a torture to him: to see him sit gazing upon it, without daring to venture to break the seal, reminded one of that splendid painting by one of the old masters, where the Good Spirit stands gazing tranquilly upon the Evil One, until the latter seems to shrink into the dark background of the picture, and is buried beneath the blinding light, that bursts gradually upon the beholder. To write to Emma, at length became the work of hours; sheet after sheet was destroyed; Love was still at his elbow,—his bow unstrung, and his arrows broken, and his head bent down in very shame at the thoughts of what he had done; Love was still there!—but, now, alas! no longer a free agent; Shame, Guilt, and Remorse were his guards! and whenever he dared to raise his moistened lashes, he encountered fierce and fiery eyes, until thoughtless Folly came in, leading the beautiful Maria by the hand, and again dispelling the horrible vision!—but, even then, Love only smiled for a few sad moments between his tears, and

"Sighed amongst his playthings."

Godfrey could not forget all that Emma had endured for his sake,—all the privations she had undergone, the comfort she had sacrificed, the all but want which she had borne without a murmur. He would have given the world to have forgotten these things. Her smile had ever been the same in prosperity or adversity, in want or woe; the same heavenly beam broke from her face when there was but a crust upon the table to be shared between them, as when the board was covered with the richest viands. If care oppressed him, she pillowed his aching head upon her innocent bosom at night, and feigned sleep, that she might the sooner lull him to repose; then awoke and wept to herself, and outwatched the midnight hours, with thinking how she might make him happier when he awoke. He had felt her tears on his cheek in the darkness, and known they were shed for him alone; then sunk again into slumber, with a silent prayer upon his lips, thanking God for having given him such a woman!—yet, with feelings like these, he fell!

Emma had by this time arisen from her bed, pale, weak, and care-worn, but still lovely as ever; she wanted only her husband to make

her happy: the attention paid to her by Parson Preedom and his kind-hearted niece, diminished not her craving for the presence of Godfrey; and whenever she gazed at her child, her eyes filled with tears at the thought of her husband staying so long away, and her only comfort was in pressing the infant to her heart, and showering upon it the double love of a wife, and a mother.

She slept but little at nights; for it was then that she thought more about her husband. In the sighing of the tall trees around the hall, she sometimes fancied that she heard dismal sounds, and she lay awake until a low foreboding feeling at times crept over her; and in the very waving of the vine-leaves, when the moonlight fell upon the curtain, she traced strange figures—shadows, that came to look at her, then vanished, until the white blank seemed again to fill with the image of Godfrey. In the weary turning of the rusty vane upon the coach-house, she caught the sound of unearthly voices, melancholy tones that appeared to mourn over departed pleasures; syllables of despair, and mingled wailings of broken hearts, singing mournfully over hopes which had perished. And the curling tendrils upon the window, drooping from the darker shadows of the vine-leaves hung down like so many images of grief, each with her head bowed, and her hair unbound; and it was at such times a great relief to her, to hear the voice of her infant, and turn her face away to still its cries, and feel its little fingers falling warm and white upon her. Then her thoughts would wander to that living pledge of love, and she would lie awake and talk to it for hours, call it her little darling and her sweet angel, and waste over it all those endearing terms which only the heart of a fond mother can give utterance to, and which is the holiest language spoken out of heaven. And at times the child would seem to reply to it by some lisped syllable, expressive of its delight; then Emma smothered it with a mother's holy kisses. Oh! what love welled forth in that silent chamber! If ever a painter had chosen a subject, in which the figures of angels might have been in keeping with the scene, they should have encircled that bed, filled the room, and hovered among the curtains, while bending over that beautiful mother and her sinless child. Pity it is that any earthly stain should ever sully so lovely a picture, or that either the forms of Godfrey or Maria should throw their dark shadows over it!

And poor Cinderella! never did kind mistress find a more gentle nurse than our Emma did in her faithful Cinderella. For many nights she had been allowed to sleep in a little cot in the same room as Emma;

and many a time when she awoke, while the light burnt in the night-shade, would she sit up in her bed, and gaze upon her fond mistress and the child while they slept, her poor eyes very often overflowing with tears of gratitude and love. And the child! she poured forth her long pent-up love for Emma upon its little lips. Happy, really happy, was our London Cinderella! and her simple affection recalled many a smile to Emma's sweet face, when she would, if left to brood over her feelings, have been sad; and sometimes the poor girl unconsciously 'struck upon the string on which hung all her fair mistresses sorrows!'

Parson Preedom and his niece at times spent hours with her, but never once did Emma complain to them of Godfrey's neglect and absence; and when in their kindness they made mention of her husband, she parried the inquiry by saying that he had to complete a work against a given period; or that some slight misunderstanding existed between him and her father, although she had long before this had her father's permission for Godfrey to come down and remain with her until she had thoroughly recovered from her confinement. She had done so, because Godfrey had more than once made mention of the restriction laid upon his visits, and Emma had refused to stay unless the objection was removed. But Parson Preedom, a man gifted with great discernment, soon discovered that Emma was far from being happy! The source of her sorrow he knew not rightly, though he attributed much of it to the absence of her husband, and had written to Godfrey without making mention of it to Emma. The answer the good old parson received from London convinced him that all was not right; and the kind-hearted old man resolved within himself to pay Godfrey a visit, should the answers to his letters in future prove no more satisfactory than the one he had received.

But we must drop the curtain over this scene of innocence and love, and turn to the more gloomy picture of passion and guilt, by drawing the reader's attention to Godfrey and Maria.

Maria had, when very young, lost both her parents: and, at the time she became acquainted with Godfrey Malvern, was residing with an old maiden aunt, whose small fortune she had then a fair prospect of inheriting, should she outlive her kind relative. At first the old lady received Godfrey as she had done many of Maria's literary favourites; but when she perceived that he became a constant visitor, and ascertained that he was married, she lost no time, but commenced a long tirade against the impropriety of such attentions to her niece; but still Godfrey came, and Maria countenanced his coming. The old aunt

was a firm woman, she gave her niece a fortnight to think over what she herself had resolved to do; and either in that time to break off the connection for ever, or never more to enter her house. Before the expiration of that term, Maria had resolved to share her fate with Godfrey; preferring him, and the humblest abode he could provide for her, to all the fair prospects held out by her aunt. She had long before affixed the seal to her own doom. She knew that only misery awaited her; yet, with firm countenance, she put forth her hand, plücked and tasted the bitter fruit, and smiled while hanging over the destructive brink, for Godfrey's arm was still around her.

And now the great trial came, for Maria was wholly dependent upon Godfrey, and she required more substantial things than love. He had also to learn another lesson before he fully appreciated the sterling qualities of his wife. He now required double the income to what he had hitherto received, and this could only be produced by his pen; so he made an offer to produce a three-volume novel by a given time, for which he was to receive one hundred and fifty guineas, and to draw the money occasionally as he might require it while writing the work. Guilt and folly demand at times a high price from their victims, and Godfrey was compelled to pay it. So he sat down to his desk like a galley-slave to his oar, his teeth clenched, and his brow furrowed; and although he tugged along with reluctance, yet he murmured not, for he well knew that labour was too slight a punishment for what he had done—too light a penance for the weight of his crime. "I have struck upon a rock," said Godfrey to himself, "which I might have avoïded,—have shipwrecked all those who were entrusted to my care—labour only can yet carry them half heart-broken to the shore; and, threatening as the sea looks, I must battle with the billows I have raised; though I perish I will not shrink from the attempt—the past I cannot undo!—but I am willing to suffer for it."

Godfrey still occupied the same apartments at Hopkins's, and there he often sat alone writing through the whole of the weary night. He had now two works on hand at once; and when his mind was in a right mood he would produce a chapter of his novel at a sitting. His only happiness now was to bury his thoughts in his works, to live in the past among his own creations, and to forget what he himself was. But with all his skill the past would peep out. Incidents at times sprang up fast and thickly around him; and his characters fell in strange situations, such as he himself had occupied; and without being conscious of it, he drew from his own emotions and feelings as if his

heart held an invisible power over his pen, and compelled him to record all it had felt; and he was at times startled to see how much of the vice he had depicted belonged to himself, and how many of the virtues he shadowed forth had their origin in his knowledge of the character of Emma.

It is a pity that sin should furnish forth so much excellent matter for reading!—but it is so; a man must have a dash of the 'wicked world' about him in these days, to become popular at all. The most wonderful production of modern times—the opening cantos of Byron's Don Juan, are a strange minglement of good and evil, such as a saint never could have written. When vice ceases to exist in the world, there will be no writers of bad books; the heroes and heroines, will be good perfect people, parsons will have no need to preach, nor authors to write; but while the world is, what it is, evil must be denounced from the pulpit by the one, and portrayed on the pages of the other. To keep all knowledge of vice from our children, would be to turn a herd of fools upon the world—to bring them up only acquainted with what is good, might be proper, if each were doomed to lead a hermit's life; but if they once broke loose, they would then discover that all they had been taught was a huge, unmeaning LIE! From the day that our mother Eve tasted of the forbidden fruit, and became possessed of a knowledge of good and evil, up to the present hour, have we progressed in the same track; and, not content with the apple, have bitten through the bitter bark of the tree, and are now devouring our way down to the very roots, as if we would analyze the soil from which both sprung, nor rest content until we knew the beginning of the best, and the 'whereabout' of the very worst, that has, can, or ever will befal us.

To draw only Virtuous characters in this age, is to write unnaturally, —to be classed among the many good-meaning milk-and-water Authors, who, like the aforesaid beverage, do neither good nor harm. To take up a strong pen, and paint only Vice, in all its dark and hideous colours, is to add our name to the great Muster-roll of Crime—to be branded as an associate of thieves, blackguards, and blacklegs, and become a byword among all sects of the saintly and the sanctified. One course only remains open—to take the 'mingled colours of good and evil,' and to portray human nature as it exists,—to respect and reverence Virtue, even when found in the haunts of beggars, and to attack, without fear, Vice, Cant, and Humbug, which too often, under the Mask of Virtue, seek, to undermine and destroy everything good, honest, manly, and

English. This is the course we have attempted to pursue, unchecked by either the frowns of friends, or the threats of enemies!

Godfrey Malvern soon found that Maria neither possessed the patience, nor the consideration of Emma. She felt dissatisfied unless he called upon her every day, and took her out; and then she saw no end of things in the shop-windows, which he must purchase for her. She had been used to gay society, and it soon became painful to her to be alone; reading only wearied her; music made her sad, unless she had some one to applaud her performance. Could he not write as well with her beside him, as when alone? Godfrey made the attempt, but it was useless. Poor girl! she had no one to talk to while he was away, and it was but natural to suppose that she had much to say whenever he came; and, in spite of his excuses, Maria pouted her pretty lips, and hung her head angrily, whenever he went to his own apartments—for when he left her it was to write, to weep, and to think more than ever of Emma.

But we will not cast too deep a shadow before our 'coming events.' The dark will drop down, and the light leap up ere long, when the broad morning breaks forth and reveals all the mysteries which have so long slumbered through the long night of our story. With the New Year we shall commence the 'Second Book' of 'GODFREY MALVERN.' Until then we are compelled to drop the curtain over the fortunes of the frail Maria and our unhappy Hero;—until then we must leave Squire Ingledew to mature his dark plots, and Hopkins in the hands of his enemies; Emma must remain sad and sorrowful in the hall of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, with only our poor Cinderella to com fort her; and Gregory Gruff,

> "Sated with home, of wife, of children tired,
> *Poor* restless soul! *be* driven abroad to roam;
> Sated abroad! all seen, yet nought admired,
> Poor restless soul *be* driven to ramble home!"

while Mary discovers "that every day the babby grows more and more like master!"

END OF BOOK THE FIRST.

GODFREY MALVERN.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

OPENS WITH A BAD VIEW OF A HUMAN HEART, AND SHOWS THAT WEALTH, ATTENDED BY AN EVIL CONSCIENCE, CAN CLAIM NO KINDRED WITH TRUE HAPPINESS.—A CHAPTER WHICH COULD NOT HAVE APPEARED BEFORE.

WEEK after week glided away, while the chief actors in our story seemed only to sleep, as if they had left the events in which they were all interested to chance, and trusted to the future to develope itself as fate or circumstances might direct. Day succeeded day, and morning followed morning, like the bubbles of a stream rolling in light through the open forest-glade, until tumbled into the dark descent (where the closely-matted boughs make an eternal midnight), silent, broken, and seen no more: yet, Time, who marches onward, and beholds the end of all things, seemed not to have taken a stride nearer, or shaken his glass to hasten out faster, one hidden event that lurked amid his unnumbered grains of sand. Our characters may not unaptly be compared to a ship's crew, during a dead calm at sea, when not a breath of air bellies a white sail, or shakes the smallest shroud,—when they sit with folded arms upon the deck, looking upon one another without speaking a word,—all silent amid that ominous hush, yet eagerly watching the dark mass which seems to rise with a slow motion, and threatening look, from out the remotest line of the far-seen ocean; and all ready to spring up, when the pent-up air breathes its long-held breath, either in wind, fire, or thunder.

Squire Ingledew, moody, silent, and miserable, had returned to the Hall of Sutton-cum-Bottesford,—to the splendid estate which even his rebellious conscience, after endless stiflings, had almost claimed as its own; but, now, startled and driven back upon itself, trembled at the fall of every leaf, and shook at the sound of every footstep, and, in the very wind seemed to hear a voice exclaiming "This is not thine own!"

Every day—almost every hour, something transpired which inflicted a pang upon the squire's heart, and made him feel the altered position in which he stood. He had arranged to plant a hill with trees; the plan was drawn up and shown to him—he waved his hand and turned away—he shunned the very path which his labourers crossed. Workmen had been employed during his absence in London, to erect new coach-houses, and stables; they were discharged on his return to the country, the buildings left half-finished, and no reason assigned. The electors of Buttervote poured in upon him; meetings had been called in the borough, and plans arranged how he was to act during the next session of parliament; but their petitions were unread, their invitations unanswered, and a deaf ear turned to their censure, or praise. M. P.s, etc., visited him during the recess, shot over his estates, and went their way, swearing that he was the most unsocial brute in the whole range of creation. Even old persevering widows, and unmarried ladies, of 'a certain age,' who, for years, had faith in the motto 'better late than never,' who had evinced a deep respect for the squire before his face, and adored his immense estates behind his back, at length gave all up as a bad job; for their sighs, compliments, rich dresses, and splendid equipages, might as well have been breathed in the ears, or drawn up before the eyes of a dead man, as Squire Ingledew's; for upon him they were lost. He seemed only like a shadow of his former self: the great, blustering, patronizing man, had undergone a change; he was no longer what he had been. By night his rest was broken—by day he found no peace; his mind seemed ever beating within the barred-up brain, as if his thoughts were prisoners struggling to get free, that they might lose themselves for ever,—break forth and be forgotten, like the wind which passes away to return no more. Alas! Death only can drive away the sleepless watchman who knocks day and night at the gates of Memory, and keeps the tenant, Conscience, ever in alarm, nor ceases until he has hunted her into the very grave, where 'the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are for ever at rest.'

'It is a sorry sight when a vain and selfish man uncoils himself, when Conscience springs up and demands, 'as link by link unrolls,' how came the fastenings there? Great God! it is a dreadful sight! Apparent kindness shows itself springing from deep-rooted selfishness; Charity locks abashed to see herself claimed by Vanity; and how confused becomes her countenance, when Ostentation, and the love of Praise, stand boldly forth as her constant companions. When the

meek, the gentle, the kind, the low-voiced friend, whose sigh leaped forth before his shilling,—whose 'God bless you!' found an echo in the poor, unsuspecting, and grateful heart of his victim, stands forth revealed, the designing Hypocrite; the man who never gave away a penny without reckoning upon the return of a pound, or pretended to do a generous action, but that it might serve him to boast about afterwards, to lift up his eyes while swallowing his wine, and hear his parasites call him a 'good man,' until their applauding murmurs ceased with his tale; who, instead of not letting 'the right hand know what the left hand doeth,' emblazons all his would-be good deeds on the cambric which he uplifts to his eyes, that the world may run and read, while if they knew all, they would really weep for what he had done;—assuredly the devil must keep his own share of human reckonings, endorsed in a bold black hand, such as the Recording Angel would indeed blush to put down. Charity damned in the outset, drawing its very origin from evil, and acceptable only to Satan himself. Every human motive is based on selfishness: nothing noble, generous, charitable, or good, form the analysis of such a heart. ''Tis a sorry sight!'

How had Ingledew returned the kindness of his early friend and patron, Squire Emmerson? Like an ungrateful cur, he had bit the hand that fed him, had possessed himself of the property which he had promised to the dying father to husband up for his child; and the good old squire had died, blessing him,—had breathed his last prayer for the happiness and prosperity of an arrant villain! To such prayers let us hope that 'the heavens are as brass,—that the Angel of Death, while he beats his noiseless and shadowless wings above the couch of the dying, fans back the low-breathed name of the deceiver, and sends up to the portals of Heaven the blessing, to be registered in some other name, which the far-seeing Spirit has discovered wrapped up in the roll of futurity!

Years ago had Ingledew resolved to burn the original title-deeds of the estate, which, since the old squire's death, had (at the time of purchase) come into his possession. But the meek countenance, the folded hands, and the remembrance of that last prayer, seemed all to rise up before him, and he again locked them up in his secret drawer: for there are times, when

"Conscience does make cowards of us all."

He could have endured to look on the bleeding corpse of Hopkins, had it been placed before him on the night when he visited the

abode of those hired ruffians in the Borough of Southwark; but what his after-reflections might have been, Heaven only knows. He could have sat by and looked on, while another hand had committed to the flames the documents by which the future heir could still claim the estate of Sutton-cum-Bottesford; but he could not destroy them himself, and he had no one whom he dare trust to execute such a deed. The same suspicion which caused him to disguise himself to meet Dark Dick and his companions in their own low haunts,—the same feeling which induced him to intrust no second person with his secrets, acted as a check upon his own villany. He trembled to do the deed himself which he dared not to communicate to another. Bill was the only agent he had found willing to do his work without asking any questions; and even he had deceived him, for Hopkins was still alive!

Hopkins was alive, and once more at large. The ruffians had given him a share of the money they obtained from their disguised visitor in the Borough; and Jack Hopkins was released on the promise that he kept secret all that had happened. Nay, more, he had made friends of his capturers, and they had sworn to do his bidding whenever he should be able to obtain a clue to the man who had sought his life. When at liberty, he wrote to Squire Ingledew; for he well knew, from the description given him by Dark Dick, that he was the stranger who had visited them. "Remember," were the concluding sentences of Hopkins' letter to the Squire, "that I am still alive!—that I am well aware it was you, and you only, disguised although you were, who hired these men to murder me!—that they all saw your face; and that I can at any hour bring them into your presence, and that they are ready to swear to the *man* whose gold they are now spending. Silence on my part can only be obtained by your keeping out of my reach, sending me checks on your London banker to any amount as I require, or choose to write for them. I seek not your life! Wicked although I have been, when compared with you I am an angel! The three men you hired are now in my service — there are four of us to provide for. It would have been better for your pocket had you kept faith with me, and remained quiet. You are now in my power, and I will make you pay for it! Send me, by return of post, a check for five hundred pounds—I am determined to 'put money in my purse,' whilst I have the chance. Refuse to do it, and by the next coach you will find the whole four of us at Sutton-cum-Bottesford, although they know not at present that I have the

honour of your acquaintance. Remember me to your beautiful daughter! Her, both myself, my wife and children love, as if she was one of us—you I hate like h—!"

It was a long letter,—such a one as only a man like Hopkins could have written. It was bitter as death, savage as the growling of a tiger, stern in its intent as the vengeance of a man who refuses to give his victim the comfort of the grave,—who stabs then heals the wound, gives him liberty that he may again glut his hatred by dogging his steps; and when he thinks he is once more secure, comes upon him in his sleep, and inflicts another and a deeper wound.

Squire Ingledew's first thought was to shelter himself under the law, to seize Hopkins and imprison him. But then he remembered how searching is the keen eye of Justice, and he dreaded the glare of her gaze. His conscience held up its hideous microscope, and he beheld all the coiled-up monsters that slumbered or floated within; for there 'Guilt held her court!' and stood with her strong knee, like Samson holding down the lion. A moment more, and his thoughts changed; he would waylay Hopkins, stab him, shoot him, and escape. But could he escape? Bad although he felt he was at present, there was no blood on his hands, and this was some comfort. Nay, to 'give the devil his due,' he felt glad that Hopkins was still alive. What evil had he then done? So reasoned he with himself. He had hired others to commit murder? Granted, but it had not been done; conscience 'boggled,' but cleared *that* fence; and after such a leap—the chase was over level ground. He was the possessor of a rich estate?—well, but he had bought it. Of whom? How had he obtained the money? Had he used every means to discover the rightful heir? Conscience scarcely winced at that movement, but went off in gallant style to the tune of, 'the hare is lost.' The woman to whose care the heir was entrusted had gone, and, allowing his unjust mortgages, the estate was fairly sold. True enough, his own advances upon it made every other bidder look aghast! but then there was no one to dispute the heavy mortgage, or to say that he had forged Squire Emmerson's name; neither had he, for the unsuspecting Squire would have consigned his soul to Lucifer himself if Ned Stocks (now Squire Ingledew) had but put the pen in his hand. For if folly lacks a vice, it is a want of suspicion. Guilt and folly, when linked together, are ever suspicious; but when folly is left to himself, he cocks his cap, jingles his bells, and whistles merrily to the wind; and is very often only his own enemy, with a heart better than his head.

But amid all this anguish, horror and remorse, Squire Ingledew found a true comforter in his daughter, for he knew not her sterling value until trouble came, — never felt the power of true sympathy thrill through his heart, until he heard it in the voice, and owned it in the look, of our matchless Emma. She was his ministering angel, when the dark cloud furrowed his brow, and the canker-worm gnawed into the very citadel of his heart. Like David of old she came with harp and voice; and as he drove away the gloom which overshadowed the spirit of Saul, so did she chase away the fiend which preyed upon her father; and although she could not charm him into a forgetfulness of the past, and tear up the painful roots of memory, still the peace of her own pure spirit fell at times upon him like a gentle sleep, and in remembering her he felt not so acutely the deep agonies of his mental pain. She rarely named her husband, for now her father began to fear him; he knew not how far Hopkins might have committed himself and his secret to Godfrey; he felt himself falling, and as he tumbled lower in his own eyes, so did he fancy that all who looked down upon him would treat him with the scorn and contempt which his evil deeds so fully merited. There was no living soul to whom he dare unburthen his heart; he would have felt much easier if he could but have revealed his painful secrets to his daughter, but he feared that even she would ever after loath him.

Sometimes the Squire resolved within himself to seek out Hopkins, to humble himself before him, to entreat of him to find out the rightful heir, to give up the estate without a struggle, and trust to his forbearance, and the sums he had advanced to his father for his future support. But when he again glanced at the letter Hopkins had sent him, he knew that his submission would be received with contempt, for every word seemed as if burning with vengeance. He would have given up half the estate of Sutton-cum-Bottesford to have stood on the same footing with Hopkins, as he did, on the night when they first met, for then he had not attempted his life. "How true it is," muttered the Squire to himself as he paced his lonely chamber in the dark, after having tried in vain to sleep—"how true it is that one crime leads to another, that pride steps in even when we feel most penitent, and the whisper of the world's opinion comes upon us like the voice of an evil spirit, that urges us in the hope of extricating ourselves from one crime, to plunge into another. Had I but have dared this man to have done his worst when we first met, I should have known what that worst would have been ere this. Had I told him that I but

awaited the return of the rightful heir, and when my claims were satisfied, was ready at any moment to give up my purchased title to the estate, I might for a while have foiled him by assuming a virtue, which, alas! I never possessed. Poorer I might have been when I was driven from out these gates, but the world would have given me credit for acting with something like honour. But Hopkins knows all, can trace the career of the child step by step, and is perhaps, even now, when he has arrived at man's estate, furnishing him with money, and keeping him concealed, that he may at any moment he pleases produce him, and eject me from the estates. There remains but one course; I will myself seek out the young heir if he is to be found on earth, I will become his friend, he shall live beneath the roof of his fathers, and who knows but that the gentle nature of my daughter may—Oh! God, even there stands a stumbling-block!"

And he remembered that she was married. Then his thoughts reverted to the great and tumultuous chaos from which they had sprung; where, rolled like wave on wave, base ingratitude, unredeemable robbery, intended murder, all tossed on a sea ridgy with lies, whose crested heads but sank to rise again, from the deep troughs of hypocrisy and deceit. Still there was one cure for all these evils, one door out of which the tortured spirit could pass. He walked up to the window, his brow dark and his teeth clenched, while the perspiration stood in large drops upon his forehead; there was no moon, but the stars shone brightly, for it was a sweet night in June, and he turned to take his last look of heaven. As he drew aside the blind, the glimmering starlight fell upon the bright barrels of his loaded pistols, which hung ever ready in case of danger above the mantel-piece: he smiled grimly as he gazed upon them. He looked out upon the beautiful gardens which lay around the hall; he saw a figure moving dressed in white; his curiosity tempted him to throw up the window, and he heard a sweet voice say, "Father! is that you?" He replied, then hastened to finish his dress, and join her:—he thought no more of destroying himself that night.

It was the anniversary of Emma's wedding night, and she could not sleep; so she had left the child with Cinderella, and wandered out into the garden alone, for 'her soul was very sad.'

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HOW HOPKINS DELIBERATED BEFORE HE BEGAN TO ACT, AND WAS WITHIN A HAIR'S-BREADTH OF COMMITTING MURDER — TO WHICH ARE ADDED DIVERS AND SUNDRY CONSIDERATIONS WHICH ATTEMPT TO PROVE THAT MURDER 'IS NO JOKE.'

The reader will have obtained some insight into the state of Hopkins' feelings from the letter which he sent to Squire Ingledew, although that letter revealed but very little of the bold and daring plans he had resolved to execute, to work out his intended vengeance. The ruffians who had been hired to murder him were now in his power—in his pay; they were ready at any moment to do his bidding, for they well knew that the liberty they enjoyed was solely owing to Hopkins' forbearance; and although they hated, yet they feared him, and they also knew that he was in possession of some secret, of which they still remained 'in ignorance.' More than this, Hopkins had made friends of many policemen: move wherever he might about his own neighbourhood, there were ever some one or another on the beat, with whom he seemed acquainted, and when he was only with his three companions, these 'dark-blue guardians of the night' were never far from him; let him go up a gloomy court or enter some ale-house of a most suspicious character, he was still 'within ken,' of this strongly organized force. Money he always had about him, and at times considerable sums, and under the strong excitement to which his mind had of late become subject, no marvel if he often drank deeply. His companions had resolved amongst themselves to rob him, whenever an opportunity offered, but even the landlords of these late and disreputable houses seemed to watch over him, and calling in the police, (whom Hopkins was frequently treating with drink outside the door,) would take away his money, give him a written acknowledgment of the sum in their possession, and keep it until the next day, when he was sober, and come to claim it. There was no man who could move with greater safety either by night or day for a mile or two around the neighbourhood of Lock's Fields than John Hopkins; and he knew it. Nor were the secret agents of the police entirely ignorant of the source from which he obtained his money: he had been watched into the banking-house in Lombard-street; checks he had presented for payment had been examined; it was

not their business to enquire further, having once ascertained that 'Pay to John Hopkins or Bearer,' with the signature of 'Edward Ingledew,' was no forgery; they had fulfilled their duty, and the order the men received from their chief officer was, 'to see that no harm befel him, for there was a mystery about him which might some day turn out to be worth a plum.' Added to all this, there was his long absence from home during his imprisonment, and the search made after him by the police. This Hopkins kept a secret, only stating that 'he went into the country for a change of air,' at which Dick and Sam would laugh, for they also had their reasons for keeping the matter quiet; neither did Hopkins ever 'babble out' his secrets when he was drunk. He seemed only to be acting a part, to spend his money in cards, drink and riot, while his mind was busied in the accomplishment of some mightier object; for there were moments, even amid the hours of his revels, when he would push aside the cup and cards, rest his hand on his head, and sit absorbed in deep thought; and such an ascendency had he gained of late, that his brother topers dared not break in upon his reverie, though Dark Dick would at times whisper to Sam that 'the black ox had trod upon his foot again.' True enough there were times when the fears of his ruffianly comrades would peep out, especially when they had become 'maudlin drunk,' and touching him on the shoulder, 'hope that he bore no malice?' for his fits of abstractedness sometimes alarmed them; but he would even then turn round, the ruins of his fine countenance flushed with an expression such as they could not comprehend, and say, "Peace, fools! why disturb me? —make yourselves easy, call for more drink,—I have forgiven you: is not that sufficient? I was not thinking about you;" and he often on such occasions spoke the truth, for his thoughts were then

"Soaring up to strike down higher game."

At length Hopkins resolved within himself to face Squire Ingledew, for he well knew where he was to be found. He then invited his three companions to accompany him, neither revealing his intentions, nor naming the place he was about to visit, merely promising to pay their expenses during a short trip into the country; at the announcement of which they were all delighted.

The glasses of brandy drunk, and the number of cigars smoked during their journey to Sutton-cum-Bottesford, we shall not pause to enumerate. Wherever the coach stopped to change horses they alighted to drink; while it rolled along the dusty road they smoked;

as Sam said, "they travelled by steam!" and what with the reeking of the horses, the dust on the roads, and the clouds of smoke, it was almost a marvel they ever found their way to the village.

Hopkins only was moody and thoughtful; the rest were merry as Christmas. He had much to occupy his mind—they only to think of enjoying themselves. Once arrived at Sutton-cum-Bottesford, they took up their quarters at the Brown Cow. The landlady did not much like the looks of her guests, but she had had many a queer customer in her day, so determined to keep her eye on them. Hopkins knew the village well, although years had elapsed since he last visited it.

Dark Dick had been kind to him during his imprisonment; and although Hopkins was unwilling to trust him too far, still he well knew that to a certain extent he might rely upon him, for Dick had less of the brutal ruffian about him than Bill. Hopkins called him aside, after they had dined at the village-inn, and pulling out a sealed note, said, "Dick, I have chosen you as my confidant. I shall be absent for a short time; but if I do not return before dark, break open this seal, and you will know where to find me. But, remember, it must not be broken open till after dark: should I not return by that time—I shall need your help. Ask no questions, nor breathe a word about the matter—keep Bill and Sam sober, if you can, until I return." Hopkins shook the hand of his companion, and left the house.

"This is devilish funny," said Dick, when left to himself; "But, d—n me, I'll wait to see what turns up. Hopkins has a way with him, that beats me at times. If it came to bully-ragging one another, I should be a match for him. There's something about Jack, which seems to turn me inside out when I'm not at all prepared for it. But I'll be true as steel to him. It's only waiting two or three hours, then I shall know all. There's something in the wind, more than I can scent. He hasn't brought us down here for nothing!"

Saying which, he joined his companions, and merely said that he hoped they would not take too much, as Hopkins had gone to visit an old friend, and when he returned intended "to make a night of it."

Hopkins gave the landlady a five-pound note before he went out, and said, "We have come from London to enjoy your country air for a day or two. I am paymaster for the company. Should there be any change out when we settle, you will hand it over to me—should there be more money wanted, I will pay it. I dare say you neither know nor care who we are, so long as we pay."

Mrs. Tomlinson received the money with her best curtsey; said she

had no doubt they were gentlemen, and would endeavour to make them as comfortable as lay in her power. So both parties seemed satisfied; though the landlady still felt within herself "that something had brought them there," and that "something" she was determined to "ferret" out, if "she could."

Hopkins knew each 'lane and every alley green,' for miles around that neighbourhood; for scarcely twenty years had elapsed since he was appointed deputy-steward to Squire Emmerson by Ned Stocks, and Ned was now Squire Ingledew. "I little thought that fellow would reign master here, when first I entered this park," said Hopkins to himself, as he threw open the huge iron gates, and cast his eye upon the weather-beaten escutcheon, which hung above the centre of the arched gateway. "What a canting, whining, obsequious slave he was in those days, always ear-wigging the poor old Squire, and making him believe that he lived for no other earthly purpose than to watch over his welfare. And yet the base hypocrite was at the same time encouraging the Squire's young wife to rush into all kinds of extravagance, and furnishing her with the means, by mortgaging the estate. Well, he has feathered his nest to some purpose at last. Feathered it! poor fool! he has sat and hatched the eggs of a cockatrice. Had he, however, kept his promise with me, he might have enjoyed his ill gotten wealth for ever for what I should have cared."

He passed along the solemn old avenue, beneath the ancient elm-trees which overhung the wide carriage-road and looked like the roof of some huge cathedral; while the chequered light which streamed in between the closely-twined branches and thickly-matted leaves, fell upon the gravel and the greensward, in dark and golden net-work, formed by the shadow and the sunshine, just as the leaves quivered, and the light came trembling in between them. Years had rolled away since he last traversed that path. What changes had taken place! He recalled the very hour when he first entered those gates;—then he had not a crime upon his conscience which might have raised a blush on a maiden's cheek; and now—he pressed his hand to his forehead as he recalled the past. "Yet he made me what I am," muttered Hopkins, as he walked slowly along—his dark brow moved with painful passions; "I knew not what I had done, until he and the villanous lawyer entrapped me. Then, fool that I was! I fled. Had I but had courage enough to have brought them to justice, to have met them face to face, and before the Squire, proved all that I could have proved, they would have been transported, and I might now

have had the consolation of having rid England of two villains, and of having saved an old and honourable family from destruction. Had I done this, I should not now have been what I am,—an associate of thieves and ruffians!"

By this time he stood before the front of the hall. The doors were wide open, and a rich summer sunset streamed full upon the old building, giving a grey golden tinge to the massive mullions, and falling upon the glass in such ruddy splendour that every window seemed on fire. He ascended the steps—not a servant was in sight. He placed his hand upon the ponderous bell-handle—then took it away without ringing, and walked boldly into the centre of the hall. It looked just as it had done twenty years before. True, there were a few modern innovations, but the fine old oaken staircase, the knight in mail on the white horse, the ancient suits of armour, and the deer's antlers above the staircase, carried away the eye from the modern gimcracks which were placed about, and struck the beholder only by their bold baronial beauty. Here leave we Hopkins, like Coriolanus, in the hall of Aufidius,—not 'like a guest,' while we turn to the apartment in which at that very moment of time was seated Squire Ingledew.

The Squire sat in his large easy chair, on one arm of which rested his elbow, while his forehead was buried in the palm of his hand, for he was absorbed in deep and agonizing thought. He looked ten years older than he did a twelvemonth before: those who had only seen him on the day when he first invited Godfrey Malvern to dinner, and had beheld him then, without witnessing the change as it had taken place, would hardly have known that it was the same man. The apartment in which he sat retained much of its original character. There had been less of that barbaric confusion carried on here, which had so strangely mutilated the appearance of the large apartments—where the massive bay windows had been replaced by sash-doors, and such deeds done, as would have made an antiquarian swoon outright. Here, however, the old furniture was the same as it was two centuries back, all, saving the table, and the easy-chair in which the Squire sat. Old-fashioned high-backed chairs, with twisted backs and feet—their summits spanned with little angels as fat as sucking-pigs, and cheeks swelling out as if they chewed tobacco, and took an ounce at a time for a quid. Ancient black beaufets, quaintly-carved tables, a suit or two of armour, antlers of deer, and by way of contrast, a staring red-and-green carpet of a large pattern, which the old portraits on the wall seemed to look very savage at. Such a man as Squire Ingledew seemed to have no right

in that room, unless it was to be laid sound asleep on that hateful carpet. It wanted filling up with a manly figure, dressed in the old costume, and seated in one of those high-backed chairs, perusing an old black-letter copy of Chaucer in folio, with a quaint silver goblet before him, embossed with huntsmen, horses, and hounds, and reeking with spiced wine,—an hour-glass, etc.; and it would have made a picture. As it was, it was emblematical of the mind of its occupier, and was a fair specimen of *his* taste,—a fair proof of what beggars will do when they are once mounted on horseback.

The fire-place was very ancient, and in the centre was carved in freestone the arms of the Emmersons. In former times one of the ancestors had been knighted, but during the Civil Wars the family had been shorn of this honour, for taking part with Cromwell. But although they had sunk to plain Esquires, still the old escutcheon had escaped, and been borne for two centuries unquestioned and unaltered; as the old Squire used to say at times, "It shows that we were somebody once."

By chance the squire shifted his uneasy position, and his eye fell upon the old family arms: he had noticed them an hundred times before, but now the simple armorial bearings, cut in cold freestone, seemed somehow to give him pain; for he knew no more about bends, chevrons or points, than a pig. As for the motto, though Parson Preedom had once translated it for him, he had quite forgotten the meaning; although if the Latin sentence had stood out in bold, common English, 'I FALL TO RISE!' it might just then have added to the squire's perplexity. As it was, however, his fancy had traced a strong resemblance in the crest, to the countenance of Hopkins; whether it was the sharp edges of the helmet, the dents, made either by time or accident, which resembled a sunken cheek, and a deep-set eye; or whether the fiend had planted himself in the freestone, and puckered up the helmet into the likeness which so much troubled the squire; or thinking of Hopkins at the moment, fancy, in one of her freaks, had played him this trick,—to the day of his death he never knew. One thing, however, was certain;—he heard a deep voice exclaim, "I have come at last!" and turning round, he beheld Hopkins standing in the room, the door of which had stood ajar, so that he entered unperceived.

It would have made a fine picture, could the figures of these two men have been taken at that very moment. The astonishment, the speechless astonishment of the squire—his countenance pale as an ashen

corpse—his mouth open, as if in the act of speaking, while the words stuck in his throat,—the fear—the cowardly fear, which made him shake for a few moments like the last leaf which autumn leaves,—then the red angry burst, which flushed over him like a threatening sunset! It was a grand display of the silent working of passion.

We have before attempted to describe the features of Hopkins:—in a long day's walk through large London, you would meet with no countenance like it: some resemblance might be traced among the Jews, or Italians, but still you could see that it had once been English. But had you seen the glare of those deep-sunken, hollow eyes, as they flashed, yet seemed fixed upon the squire,—had you seen that face on which the yellow sunset fell, revealing every care-dug chasm, every furrow which evil-deeds had made, as they stole out of the brain, and left their nailed footmarks on the cheeks, while they descended to the hands, and there lurked to be put into execution, you would have beheld as fine a portrait of the devil, as ever has been drawn, taking away the horns, tail, and club-feet, and all those vile appendages which Milton threw aside, in scorn, when he drew that masterly portrait of the dark hero who waged war against Heaven. Hopkins, at that moment, looked as superior to Squire Ingledew as the crested game-cock does to the feathered lord of the dunghill; and when, with three haughty strides, he marched nearer to the trembling squire, and said, "You give me as cold a welcome as the grave you had hoped ere this to have seen me in!"—then it was that his iron countenance flashed with a savage triumph upon his enemy, and he looked more like a superior fiend than a man.

"I—I wish you in your grave!" stammered the squire, scarcely knowing what he said. "Pon my honour——"

"Fool! liar! villain!" muttered Hopkins between his teeth, and checking him without ceremony, said, "Here is the pistol you forgot to take away with you on the night you visited that ruinous house in the borough, in disguise, and here is the empty cash-bag, which contained the gold, we have since so merrily spent! Not far off are the very men to whom you paid it! And here am I, Ned! in this very hall, which you have no more right to than I have! Here am I, your mortal enemy!"

"Fool! liar! villain!—in my own house?" echoed the squire, springing from his seat like a tiger from its lair, and closing with Hopkins in an instant, while the pistol fell on the floor during the struggle, "Rascal! how dare you to intrude upon me!"

The squire struck Hopkins on the chest, such a blow as made him stagger for a moment—but it was only for a moment; for when Hopkins closed with his antagonist, he seized him by the throat, and imbedding his knuckles within the squire's neckerchief, and pressing with all his strength beneath the chin, he bore him to the ground, while his face blackened as he fell; and still retaining his hold without falling with him, he bent over Ingledew until he was startled by that dreadful rattling in the throat, which announces death, and by the loud shrieking of Emma, who had entered the room, and came just in time to save her father's life,—that life which her presence, alone, had twice saved.

Dear Emma, hadst thou been in London with thy husband, thy father would have been in his—— 'But judge not, lest ye be judged.' Dear, sweet, injured Emma! I would have given thee a worthier father if I could.

A man may forgive the 'jade who has jilted him,'—the friend that has proved false—the man who, in his passion, smote him on the cheek, called him thief! liar! and scoundrel! he may even forgive the ungrateful wretch he has befriended, to whom he has given his last shilling, while he himself has gone hungry and supperless to bed. These things a downright noble-hearted man will forgive, and sleep more secure than those who injured him; for although his heart may ache beneath such evil treatment, he will, nevertheless, at last find a peace which 'they know not of.' But when they seek to take away his life, to cut him off without allowing him a moment either to repent of the past, or prepare for the future, and have no other motive for so doing, than that they may 'eat, drink, and be merry,' and for a few brief years stand fair in the estimation of their 'brother-worms;'—when they endeavour to do this, surely a man is justified in defending himself; for life was not given us to resign it to the first miscreant who would take it, without making a struggle.

Had Hopkins murdered Squire Ingledew, he had a good excuse on his side—"he would have killed me if he could!" No warrior ever had a better,—although they might have hung him for it, maugre his excuse. "But," says Hopkins, "he first sought to take away my life!" "Granted, Mr. Hopkins; but the law makes no provision, that you, in return, should take away his." "But, self-preservation?" argues Mr. Hopkins. "All very well in a field of battle, my friend; but a queer matter if done at Sutton-cum-Bottesford." "But if a man, armed, at midnight, enters my house?" "All very fine, Mr Hopkins! but retaliate the next night, and enter his; then see what

the law will do for you; you will either be transported or hung, if caught. It is no joke to kill a man under any circumstances; even a 'little babby' is an awful affair!—but a great hulking chap, big enough to be a ghost, like Hamlet's father, to come at midnight, draw the bed-curtains aside, and, pointing to his "gory, gaping, ghastly wounds," to say, 'How do you feel, old fellow?' why it's enough to make one wish that we had quietly stood half-a-dozen good whacks of the head with the butt-end of a blunderbuss. I'll tell you what it is, Mr. Hopkins; self-defence is all gammon! and I have come to the resolution never to kill anybody whilst I live, unless Her gracious Majesty compels me, —then I would not stick at a score or two of Chinese; for, as Burns says—

'Folk maun do something for their bread,
An' sae maun Death.'

Dead men tell no *tales!*—let them wag then, and be hanged. What's a gross or two of Chinese ghosts, if killed per order; it's only depopulating two or three heathen pagodas,—the duty of all good Christians."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

IN WHICH WE OCCUPY A BAD POSITION, AND OPPOSE A POOR FRONT TO THE MILITARY MORALS OF THE PRESENT AGE, YET SHELTER WITHIN THE CENTRE OF OUR SOLID-SQUARE, GODFREY MALVERN, AND MARIA, IN SPITE OF THE SHARP SHOTS FROM SPOTLESS SOCIETY.

Turn we again to the dark side of our story—to the guilty loves of Godfrey and Maria,—to the misery which they had drawn down upon themselves. Weeks, and even months had passed away, without Godfrey once visiting his wife; he had even gone so far, as to forbid her coming to London, promising that when he had completed his two works, he would come down and spend a few weeks with her, and her father, since he had at last been so condescending as to invite him to Sutton-cum-Bottesford. Solitude had wrought a great change in the once gay and light-hearted Maria; for Godfrey could not be always with her, and he still occupied his old apartments at Hopkins', nor did

as like to give them up; for he well knew that Mrs. Hopkins still corresponded with Emma, and he dreaded a discovery. Maria was now asnamed of appearing abroad; and although the lady with whom she livid was a very kind-hearted woman, still she often put many awkward questions to her about Godfrey, as if she almost doubted whether or not he was her husband. These questions were very painful to Maria; and nothing would now ease her mind, but having more of Godfrey's society, and that at a time when every hour became of double its former value; for the period he had agreed upon for the appearance of his works was fast drawing to a close, and the sacrifice he had consented to make if they were not ready by a given time, was very serious.

And now Maria would sit hour after hour at the window, to watch for his coming; and sometimes, when he was behind the promised time, she beame peevish, pouted her lips, and would not be friendly with him: she was not possessed of that sweet temper which was so natural to Emma. Still Godfrey bore with her; he knew how wretched her feelings were, sitting there alone, day after day, with no one to talk to, excepting himself; and great were the exertions he made to be more with her. He obtained for her the best works from a neighbouring library he brought her music; and there was an excellent piano in the room: but, what pleasure was it to her, to sit playing to herself?—to have no one by to applaud her performance?—

"To waste her sweetness on the desert air?"

She often left her books, and her music, and sat down alone to weep. It was while in one of these low-moods, that her landlady, one day, tapped at the parlour-door, and said, "If I am not too intrusive, I will bring in my work, and sit with you a little while, until your husband comes."

Maria blushed scarlet, as she handed her a chair; and said, "I shall be very happy of your company."

"You seem very fond of melancholy music," continued the landlady,—a woman who had seen better days, and was herself no bad player;—"it was once the case with myself. My husband—but it is a long tale—we separated soon after our marriage—he has long been dead: during our separation I did nothing but play sorrowful and plaintive airs. It makes one very sad, to be deprived of the society of those we love," added she with a sigh;—"but I never knew his value while living."

"It does, indeed," answered Maria, sighing heavily; "and yet there is no help for it!"

"Especially, to be left alone of a night, as you are," proceeded the lady; "I think if I were ever to marry again (which I never shall), I should not make choice of a husband connected with the press. It is a slavish life,—that of working all night. I had a gentleman who lodged with me once before; and he was connected with one of the daily papers, and was compelled to be up at nights; but he was not confined so many hours as your husband."

"He has many things to attend to just now," replied Maria, greatly confused; for the word husband, recalled that of wife, and she was not senseless to shame.—"After a time he will be less busy," added she: "then I shall have more of his society."

"Pray, had you been married long, before you took these apartments?" inquired the landlady.

"Not very long," replied Maria, her brow burning as she answered the question.

"I should have thought you had," continued the landlady, smiling "for most young husbands would have been jealous, to have left so young and handsome a wife so much alone; and you see no company?"

"I have none whom I much care to see, saving him!" replied Maria. "My best friends looked coldly upon me when we became acquainted!" and a tear gathered in her dark eye, as she recalled the kindness of her aunt.

"I am sorry if I have pained your feelings!" said the landlady; "I did not intend it. I see now why you are so low-spirited. But it would be unnatural not to feel so, when we think about old friends. Never mind, my dear lady; you may yet become reconciled; and, if you will give me permission, I will come and sit with you whenever you feel disposed to have my company. I will do all I can to make you comfortable. You shall neither want society nor a friend, if you can but bear with such dull company as mine."

A tear stood in the landlady's eye, as she uttered the last few sentences; and her heart was so full, that she could not resist kissing Maria on the cheek, before she left the apartment with the tears streaming down her face.

Never had Maria before so acutely felt, her low and fallen position,—never reflected how desolate, and utterly miserable she must soon be, unless she had some one to call her friend. But the keeper of

a lodging-house!—her proud heart shook again, and her sobs rose louder and faster, as she recalled her humiliating position. Weep on, proud beauty!—our first mother wept before thee, when she sinned, and sacrificed her paradise! Thy intellectual accomplishments will avail thee but little now! It is but agony to think of the many gay assemblies over which thou hast presided, as the reigning idol of the night!—the noisy and unmeaning *soireés* thy beautiful face has shone upon are eclipsed to thee! Those who would have given thee all the little heart they had to spare, when due deductions were made for the love they had for themselves, and all the 'pomps and vanities of this wicked world,' would now look on thee with scorn;—for true pity they never felt. I know not, Maria, whether I would not rather see thee what thou art, than the wife of one of those heartless puppies who hovered about the throne of thy beauty, redolent of rings and brooches, perfect in mustachio, and eye-glass, faultless in dress and jewels, yet empty in head, and hollow in heart. Fallen although thou art, there was no selfishness about thy love! No! stained as it is with guilt, it was more pure than that which is too often offered up in mockery, on the holy altar of marriage. Were I thy only judge, Maria, I should acquit and forgive thee, after a gentle reprimand. For the sake of Godfrey Malvern, thou didst give up thy high and honourable station in society,—a station which thou canst never again regain; for love with thee, 'is love for evermore!' This thou didst do, well knowing that thou couldst never be his wife." "I know it," answers Maria! "yet I would rather have been his slave,—served him at table, and fulfilled every menial office, than have been the wife of any of those disgusting dandies, who, parrot-like, prated their nightly nonsense in my ear." "But remember, Maria, it is not thyself alone whom thou hast injured; thou hast, in some measure, weaned his affections from an amiable and virtuous wife, one whose first study was the happiness of her husband, and who loved him with an affection that was deeper, if not stronger than thine." "Then he deceived me!" answers Maria: "I loved him not until she forsook him; or if I did, he knew not of my love. He told me how he had struggled to support her. I know he did. He confessed to me how dearly he had loved her. I believe he had; although my heart aches to own that belief.—But when he told me, how she had left him, and gone to live in comfort and splendour, while he, with all he had endured for her sake, was still left to struggle with his difficulties—to labour alone, with no one to comfort him; I sympathised with him. I pitied him, and then I

loved him." Maria! he deceived both himself and thee! Compared to him, with all thy faults, thou art an ANGEL! Godfrey Malvern! were it not too late, now, I would blot thy name, for ever, out of this book! Thou art a villain! Why didst thou first seek the society of Maria? Why soften thy voice to her ear, and utter falsehoods against thy matchless wife?—she whose every thought was to make thee happy—she who gave up all the comforts of her father's house, her flowers,—her delightful walks,—scenes which were imprinted on her innocent heart,—the song of the birds,—the sound of the familiar bells,—even the poor villagers whom she relieved, and whose eyes blessed her in silence,—and came to live with thee, and to bear, without murmuring, all the poverty and hardship which can only be known by those who struggle for a literary livelihood in London;—who sat with thee, night after night, shared thy labour and thy homely meal, yet never once complained; and who only left thee, from motives of pure love;—whose heart ached at the prospect of every mile which severed her from thee, yet bore it, in the hopes that it might be better for thyself! How couldst thou doubt her intentions, for a single moment, Godfrey Malvern, after all she had endured and suffered for thy worthless sake? Compare thy heart,—thy motives, with Emma's, Godfrey, then blush for very shame!

But it is night, Godfrey Malvern! some hours past the time which thou didst appoint to meet Maria! She sat at the window watching for thee, until long after dark. Emma also was thinking of thee at that very time. She was very unhappy, and wanted thee to comfort her. But thou hast come at last—not to her, but to Maria; thy hands are feverish,—thy pulse beats too rapidly,—thou hast been writing all night—even Maria perceives that thou art not well; thou must lay thyself down upon that sofa, and rest. Maria will sit by, and keep watch over thee, and hold thy hands between her own.

She did watch over him; and no accusing word escaped her lips until he awoke and said, "I must leave you, my love, and produce another chapter before morning."

"Surely you are not going so soon!" answered Maria, throwing her arms around him as he rose from his seat to depart. "I have had no one to speak to, all day, until you came. Do not leave me, yet, love! I am sure you would not, if you could but know how miserable I feel when you are away!"

"I am also miserable!" said Godfrey, heaving a heavy sigh as he spoke; "and there is no help for it! And were I not to leave you

at times, as I do, we should be still more unhappy, by adding poverty to misery; for you know, Maria, my pen is the only weapon by which I am enabled to keep want from the door."

"Then let me leave these apartments to-morrow!" replied Maria; "your absence is more painful to me than either poverty, or want, can ever be! It is only you in the whole wide world, that I now care for! Although the lady of the house is very kind to me, still I fear that she suspects I am not your wife." And she folded her arms more tightly around him, as she spoke, while her long dark ringlets fell loose upon his manly bosom; and as he returned her embrace, he felt that he was a villain!

"Do not weep, Maria!" said Godfrey, the words half-choking him, as he uttered the sentence. "All will yet be well!—the time may come, when you will have too much of my company—when my own circumstances may be different, and I shall not be compelled to leave you—to endure this wear and tear of brain which I now do, and to produce a given number of pages, before I am entitled to draw the few paltry pounds which are so necessary to supply us with our every-day comforts. Would to God! we never had met!—we should have been spared much misery! It is for yourself I grieve, Maria! Could I alone suffer, I would endure the most maddening agonies, without a murmur! But I cannot forget Emma! dearly as I love you. Had I never known her, we should now have been happy. I have done her grievous wrong, Maria! and you too. But I knew not then the pangs I was inflicting. But I will never forsake you, Maria. I am a man, with all my failings, and can never cease to love you." And he wept like a child while he clasped her in his arms.

"I know it, Godfrey!" answered Maria, "yet I foresaw not all. I will not say that you deceived me. I know that you loved me then—and that is enough. You I have ever loved—I shall never love another, Godfrey! I never loved any but you!—and you know it. You was my first, and will be my last, love. Nay, do not unloose my arms! If you are once unkind to me I shall destroy myself. I know how right, how necessary it is, that you should leave me. I know how deeply I have injured her! But pardon my selfishness, my weakness, my folly, my love" (and every sentence was broken by a sob); "when you are away I have no one else to think upon—if I take up a pen, and try to forget the past, it is useless—if I think, it is only of yourself,—to sit and number the hours that must elapse before I can see you again. We must be more together, God-

frey, or I shall soon die! I would that I were dead! Were it a garret I should not care, if I only shared it with you. I shall soon need some place of retirement, for my more complete seclusion from the eyes of the world!" And she wept until her bosom shook under the deep emotions which agitated her, and her heart beat as if it would break, while heaving beneath her 'sea of troubles.'

"This is madness, Maria!" replied Godfrey, drawing her unconsciously still closer towards him: "you require more from me than I am able to do. You know how necessary solitude is for an author. Were you my wife, a thousand times over, I could not spend more time with you than I do."

"But only to know that you were in the next room, or under the same roof with me, would be happiness," answered Maria. "I know it cannot be! yet I have no one to comfort me but you."

"Hush! hush!" said Godfrey, as he kissed, and attempted to soothe her, for he scarcely knew what he said; "you know I love you; and ——"

"I believe you do!" sobbed Maria; "yet I also know that I can never be your wife!—it is that which is breaking my heart."

"Nothing could ever make you more dear to me than you are," replied Godfrey.

"I know it," answered Maria; "and yet there are impossibilities which I can never attain, and which now only could make me happy! Then I might go wherever you went, without hanging down my head in shame; but I know this can never be! Oh! I am very miserable —I cannot sleep a-nights for thinking of what I am, nor forget what I might have been, but for you; and yet I do not blame you, Godfrey. Had I had a mother, it might not have been thus! She died while I was young—I had no one to guide me aright. And yet this is folly! I am no child—I knew what would be the end of all this.—Oh, God! I would that I were in my grave. I have only myself to blame!"

"Would that I were the chief of some wild Indian tribe," continued Godfrey, as he placed her gently upon the sofa; then paced the apartment with hurried and passionate strides: "I could then defy the unfeeling world, and all its iron forms and ceremonies—account only for my brides by the number of buffaloes I was able to kill to support them! and—let us leave England, Maria! there are other lands beyond the ocean, where we may live unknown—where the hiss of scorn will never be heard—nor the pointed finger of cen-

empt be seen by us. I can never look upon her face again, Maria! and come what may, I am willing to share your fate."

"Nay, this must not be," answered Maria. "No, Godfrey! fallen as I am, I am still a woman! and if you could be hard-hearted enough to forsake your wife and child, it would not be long before you did the same by me. I have done her injury enough already—to this I will never consent. There is no place, however remote and solitary, that we could retire to, but their images would be there—my conscience has already a heavier load than it can bear.—I am calm now—leave me, Godfrey. I blame not you more than I do myself—it must not come to this!"

"I have overheard all, Mr. Malvern," exclaimed the landlady, at that moment throwing open one of the folding-doors of the parlour; and catching Maria in her arms—as she fainted away—"I was prepared for this. Leave her, young man—from this hour she is mine! I will not forbid you my house, for her sake, unworthy although you are of her love. You may see her sometimes," continued she, placing Maria on the sofa, and holding up the smelling-bottle to revive her; "you may see her, but only in my presence. Dear, fallen lamb!" added she, stooping down, and kissing the unconscious Maria; "even as He, who hath taught us to forgive one another, carried the lambs in his bosom, and gently led forth those that were with young, so will I watch over thee, for my heart hath long since yearned towards thee. Look upon my face; nay, be not ashamed. I know it is foolish for me to weep thus. Kiss me, my daughter!—throw thine arms around me. I will be to thee that mother which thou didst never know! I have long loved thee. Thou shalt be my Ruth, and I will be thy Naomi. God will forgive thee, my child! weep not so. It was He who guided thee to my door. I once had a niece, but she died broken-hearted. It was another such a villain as Mr. Malvern who killed her. Nay, nay! fret not thus,—there has been ever since a void in my heart, and thou shalt fill it."

Maria had at last found a friend. Oh! how superior a one to the Widow Clarkson, whom our Emma had confided in!

And Godfrey Malvern! how he stood, or what he felt at that moment, we shall not halt to describe. He threw himself on his knees before the landlady; but she waved her hand with an air of scorn, and bade him begone to his wife! "You may be a clever man," added she; "none else could have won the heart of so beautiful

a young lady as this. But you are not a bit the less a deceitful villain!"

Godfrey Malvern felt that it was the truth, and although the rain fell in torrents, and the wind blew strong as winter, as he walked home to his lodgings in Lock's-fields, he neither regarded the rain, the wind, nor the darkness—he felt only the tempest which raged within him, as he recalled the injury he had done both to Emma and Maria. The chapter which he that night produced was one which might have startled a saint, and spoken home to the soul of a sinner. The tears fell upon the paper while he wrote! for the heart of Godfrey Malvern had not yet hardened within him.

CHAPTER XL.

HOW GODFREY MALVERN MET AN OLD FRIEND, WHO, AFTER SOME CONVERSATION, SENT HIM AWAY VERY COMFORTABLE—HOW HE AFTERWARDS VISITED MARIA, AND MADE HER VERY HAPPY INDEED, CONSIDERING ALL THINGS—A CHAPTER FROM WHICH OUR READERS WILL GLEAN BUT LITTLE TRUTH, IF THEY READ ONLY ITS TITLE.

The next day Godfrey Malvern had occasion to visit his publisher, and there met the editor, Mr. Marall, his quondam friend of the *soireé*. "Very glad to see you, Mr. Malvern," said the editor. "By the way, you never look in upon us now at Lady Smileall's: how is it? Never see the dark-haired beauty either, her that you was so sweet upon? Egad! I think it was mutual though, as my late friend Kemble used to say."—Kemble had never spoken to him in his life.

Godfrey stammered out a clumsy reply, and said that he sometimes saw her.

"She was a sly gipsy," continued Mr. Marall. "I think a good round dozen of us have been her beaus at one time or another. When one got weary, another took her up. It was but 'whistle and I'll come to thee, my lad;'—for we relieved one another like soldiers on guard. But Maria loved a change as dearly as she did a new dress. Well, I am glad you got rid of her, for I was afraid she had made a dead-set at you. Married or single were all of a price to her."

"This is the first time I ever heard her spoken so lightly of," replied Godfrey, his brow burning with indignation, while a strange sickening sensation gathered about his heart. "Vain she might have been, for what beautiful woman is not? Homage and respect she demanded, and it was always paid to her. In society she was ever merry, and in no wise backward in speech; but then what she said was always worth listening to: and what clever woman ever lost an opportunity of displaying her talents? I think you have spoken rather too severely of her," continued Godfrey, with much ado subduing his passion; "for any other beside myself might infer from what you have said, that the young lady was but an indifferent character."

"I like to see you bristle up in defence of the fair sex, my dear Malvern," continued Mr. Marall. "Egad! you do it admirably; but I had no idea, my dear sir, that you were so deeply smitten. As to her character! why a woman who will greet every man she sees with the same sweet smile as she did—who never lost an opportunity of 'showing off,' or rendering herself agreeable and killing, whenever a chance presented—who tried to impress upon the mind and heart of every new visitor, that she, Maria, was a dear, sweet, intellectual, and beautiful creature, which she, alas! made very clear proof of, by smiling every time you looked in her face, by showing her white teeth as often as she could, and by lowering her voice until she made it sound like a piece of sweet music—why I say it scarcely renders her a diamond of the purest water; for when you examine it closely you behold an immense flaw in it. But you seem ill, my dear fellow! Let us turn into the first hotel, and procure a little brandy-and-water. Egad! you look like a woman about to faint!"

"I am not ill," replied Godfrey; "the weather is sultry, and I have been sitting rather closely to my desk of late—a mere feeling of faintness, that is going off. I am sorry, however, to hear the young lady spoken of in the way you have done. Yet, surely, you can have no motive for treating her character so lightly. Not that it can concern me; but I ever thought her to be all that was amiable and virtuous. I *had* a great respect for her."

"So had I," answered Mr. Marall, "and still have. The lady is well enough, for aught I know to the contrary; but when a woman changes her suitor almost as often as she does her gloves,—takes one home with her one night and entertains him till three or four in the morning, and another a few nights after, and treats him the same,—why you know enough of the world, to be assured that people will

talk about such things. Not that I think there is any thing very bad about her after all. But the most charitable construction we can put upon such conduct is, that it does not look well. By the way, have you dined?"

Godfrey said he had taken a slight luncheon, and should not dine until late. Mr. Marall had given him his dinner for that day.

"Then I shall bid you good morning," said Mr. Marall, "and hope soon to have the pleasure of meeting you at Lady Smilcall's. Egad! you are all the talk there." So they shook hands and separated.

When he had gone, the street seemed to reel before Godfrey. He scarcely knew whether he stood on his head or his heels. He felt his heart ache. His spirits seemed so low, and such a 'sinking' feeling came over him, that had a child run against him he would have fallen He had never been jealous of Emma—she had given him no occasion; but now he doubted Maria.

Mr. Marall had no evil motive in saying what he had done about Maria: he must talk of somebody or something; any other lady would have met with the same treatment at his hands, had her name chanced to have turned up. He thought it the very height of cleverness to censure every body and everything. Many men boast of the familiar grounds they stand upon with some one beautiful woman or another of their acquaintance. They think it 'a feather in the cap;' when, at the same time, they never dared to take a liberty with the lady, whom they would lead you to infer 'they are all in all with!' This does not always spring from bad motives, it is very often a mere bounce, an imperious swagger, a 'showing off' because they have nothing better to display; you know the lady is 'somebody' worthy of notice, and these poor harmless asses, (whose random kicks at times do much mischief,) believe that they also will be thought to be 'somebody' by showing that they are on 'very intimate terms' with one who really never did more than treat them with common civility, or in some merry moment drew them out that they might make a full display of their folly, vanity and egotism. A gentleman may take a lady by the hand, give it rather too warm a squeeze, yet that is no reason why she should fall in love with him. The blood may mount her cheek, although she forces herself to smile at the moment, yet inwardly revolts at his insolence; for an innocent-hearted woman is a lover of peace, and she will take good care never to afford him a second opportunity of insulting her. But it is mean of any man to speak slightingly of a woman whom he pretends to respect: no one ever truly loved a woman who acted in so

unmanly a manner. Yet such things are done every day: many men make a conquest of beauty, that they may boast of it. Godfrey Malvern was not one of these: he loved Maria,--I blush to write it, when he had such a wife as Emma; he loved her for the sacrifices she had made for his sake, more than he did for herself; his was more the love of honour, however, than a giving up of the whole heart. Emma could call him husband, Maria could not; Emma had a claim upon him, sanctioned by the laws of the country. Maria had no such claim; Maria was his debt of honour, Emma his fair creditor, who never need be ashamed to present her account. The one merely held an I O U, the other a stamped bill, written fairly across and accepted by him. And hitherto he had felt and acknowledged the slight tenure by which Maria held him, as scarcely a jot less sacred than the legal claim of his wife. Pity Godfrey was a bad Christian! he would have made a most glorious Turk But what a change had come over him during the last hour!—every smile he could recal told against her, every kind word she had spoken to another, was to him almost proof positive of her guilt. Poor, dear, fallen Maria! she had enough to endure without meeting with cold looks from him: vain she might have been, but dear was the price she had paid for her vanity, and that her aching and all but broken heart every day testified! Had he not been blind, madly and jealously blind, he must have known that she had never cared for any other than himself. Before he came, though we must confess that her heart like melted wax stood ready to receive its impression, yet no imprint had been struck upon it. Godfrey Malvern struck his own image there, but Maria's heart was made of such materials, that it could never endure any other impression. Mr. Marall had uttered a gross calumny; she had never entertained a thought of another beyond the passing moment, until she saw Godfrey, and he had deceived both himself and her. And now he was jealous, he knew not of whom—though saving to him, she was spotless as an unborn infant;—had he in his rage struck her dead at his feet, she would have felt no accusing pang, if with supplicating hands and upturned eyes she had died exclaiming, "Godfrey, I never loved or knew any one but you."

It was fearful to look on him after he had left Mr. Marall, and drew nearer to the residence of Maria. The passengers in the street turned their heads to gaze after him. There was a look of mischief in his eyes; his short upper lip which, in its natural repose, curled upward and gave him somewhat of a proud and haughty look, almost touched his

aquiline nose, while his nostrils were dilated like a war-horse rushing reined into battle. His finger nails were clenched in the palms of his hands.

Maria's landlady was sitting with her, when Godfrey entered the room; she had intended to stay until he departed, but one glance at his countenance satisfied her that something was wrong, and when with a voice choking with anger, doubt and jealousy, though kept in abeyance by his natural courtesy before strangers, he said, "Maria, I wish to speak with you in private on a most serious matter!" the lady instantly left the room; Godfrey saw her out, then locked the doors of both the front and back parlour. Maria looked pale as death, and shook in every limb, as she said, 'Good God! Godfrey! what is the matter?—is Emma here?'

"Emma here!" answered Godfrey with a look of withering scorn; "I would to God that it were no worse,—that you were like her! Maria! you have played me false: I have heard your name made light mention of to-day, by one who could have no motive for injuring you, who knew you as many others have done before I met with you. Some one of them, perhaps when you *had* a character to lose!—Oh! God! I cannot bring myself to name, what I believe you to be."

"I understand you, Godfrey," answered Maria, with a calmness that was more awful than passion; 'You are weary of me! I know I have long been a great trouble to you; but do not insult me: there is no need to do so. After what you have said, I will trouble you no more."

"If you are innocent," continued Godfrey; "if you are what—"

"If I am innocent, sir!—What do you mean?" continued Maria, her dark eyes flashing with that searching lightning, which, meeting with the indignant thunder of the voice, and all the scornful and overcharged sultriness of the soul,—strikes and blazes out in a moment, "If I am innocent!—what do you take me for? What I am you have made me! I was innocent as the child your wife gave birth to a few months ago until I knew you; *you* know I was!"

"I believed it until to-day," exclaimed Godfrey, writhing again with internal agony: "I believe it no longer. If you are what I believed you to be, give me some proof."

"What proof can I give?" enquired Maria, with difficulty supporting herself through the trying scene, for a feeling of faintness began to overpower her. "There is no trial you can propose, however painful it may be to me to undergo, that I will not willingly accede to, if by so doing it will convince you of my innocence. God is witness,

that until I know you I had done no deed which I was ashamed to acknowledge. Spirit of my own departed mother! look down upon me in this hour of trial—look down upon thy guilty child. If ever I erred until I knew him, may I never enter those happy regions in which thy spirit is now at rest!"

There was something very harrowing about this scene—the earnestness of Maria was startling. Were she guilty, a baser being never breathed in this world! Godfrey felt that she was innocent—his heart had pleaded for her from the first. He wanted but one more proof—he believed that she possessed one treasure which was more sacred to her than the name of Heaven—it was a lock of her mother's hair!

"Bring it forth," said Godfrey; "press it to your lips! Swear by her departed spirit, that as you hope to meet her after death you are innocent!"

Maria did as he bade her—she drew forth her mother's lock of hair; and with eyes raised towards Heaven, and the tears streaming down her beautiful cheeks, knelt down, and vowed her innocence. The curses she called down upon herself if she was guilty, were more solemn than shocking, and would have struck the ear of a listener with the same awe which is felt while dwelling upon those uttered by the holy prophets. Her voice ceased, as she pressed the lock of hair to her lovely lips—then sank down silent and senseless upon the floor! Godfrey felt convinced of her innocence, and hated himself for having doubted her only for a moment.

He raised Maria from the floor, and placing her upon the sofa, sat down beside her. A shower of tears came to her relief, followed by such deep and awful sobs, as only an injured woman can heave. He spoke soothingly to her, entreated her to pardon him—pressed her pallid lips, mingled his tears with her own. He would have torn his heart out, and placed it naked in her hand, if he could but have undone the mischief of the last few hours

That dark lock of hair had long been Maria's palladium. There was a magical charm about it—she knew not why. Her mother she scarcely remembered, but the death-bed of her father she had never forgotten—that relic she had received from his own hands at the hour of death. All beside that lock of hair had perished! the grave had closed over those who had loved and watched over her, and left not a vestige behind, saving the one she had so recently pressed to her lips. Her father had clipped it off on his marriage-day, when her mother, a

blooming bride, had just returned from church. He had told Maria many a time, where she stood, how she looked, and what dress she wore, when he robbed her beautiful head of its longest ringlet. In smiles and in tears he loved to recal that day. Nor was this all; another long lock was twined with it, which he had cut off when his wife lay dead. Platted together, they looked both alike—no eye but his own could distinguish the one which was worn by the living, when it hung down and made a shadow on that warm cheek—a nest of blushes—from the one which fell upon the same spot, marble-cold, and silent—the sweet bird flown, and its nest forsaken! That hair was the very colour of Maria's—it was black as the plumes of the raven. She had severed the locks many a time when she was alone—curled and fastened them amid her own, for they were the same length, fell in the same form, and when twined among her own sable clusters, no eye could discover a difference. That relic of the dead had opened anew the well-spring of her heart,—had shown her how utterly desolate and destitute she was—and this had been done by the only man she ever loved.

"I am fatherless and motherless!" sobbed Maria, when she had somewhat recovered herself; "and yet you are cruel enough to use me thus. Oh, Godfrey! you have broken my heart. Yet I did not deserve this! I have erred in loving you, and I have suffered for it; but it is hard, Godfrey, that the hand which ought to have protected should have been the first to smite me! Had you felled me at your feet, I would have risen up, kissed, and forgiven you. But you have struck a heart that was before shattered—have inflicted a blow which I shall never recover from. Oh! that you should doubt my honour! —you whom I would have died for, would have given up my life for, when I gave up myself, if by so doing I could have made you happy!"

Her head sank upon his bosom, the tears streamed down her cheeks, and she sobbed as if her heart would break within her.

"I feel I have wronged you, grievously wronged you," replied Godfrey, his own cheeks wet with tears, and his own broad manly bosom heaving under the deep emotion which shook his whole frame. "Yet better thus, than for me to have lived in doubt. I know now that you are innocent, painful as the trial has been to you. Better thus, my dear Maria, than to have been torn to pieces day after day with a thousand doubts and jealousies. To have assumed a kindness I did not feel—to have clasped you in my arms at a moment when my heart, although it pitied, might have loathed you! I have tried you,

Maria, and now love you more than ever I did. Put that love to the test! there is nothing I can undergo which I shall consider too great a recompense for the pain I have given you! Bid me swear that I will never again seek the society of Emma, that nothing shall induce me to live with her again, and I will take the oath, nor ever break it whilst I draw the breath of life!"

He threw himself at her feet as he spoke; and had she taken him at his word he would never again have sought out Emma; for no man, with the last breath quivering on his lips, was more sincere than Godfrey at that moment.

Maria arose from the sofa: she towered above him at that moment like a tall fallen angel. She took both his hands, and held them within her own. She saw by his countenance that she had but to speak, and he was her's for ever; her eyes kindled up while she hesitated—then sank, abashed at her own thoughts. The better Spirit prevailed, as she said, "No, Godfrey! I dare not accept your offer! I shall not live long; but should I outlive your wife, swear that you will then marry none other but me, and I will forgive you all, nor ever more reproach you with what has occurred this day!"

Godfrey did as she bade him; and would have committed bigamy, had a parson been at hand.

"This is very strange!" murmurs some virtuous lady, half-inclined to throw the ninth Number of Godfrey Malvern into the fire; "upon my word, it is scarcely a moral work!"

"That may be, my dear lady!" we answer; "you have been reading the '*Times*' to-day: it reports a case of 'crim. con.,' an elopement, and a rape;—why not burn it along with 'Godfrey Malvern?' Both tell only the truth. It is not altogether a moral world!—ask Owen if it is."

"But I do think," says some narrow-bonneted sister, one who scarcely ever missed a meeting at E——r Hall,—a very Ruth in her countenance, if we could but imagine how the Ruth of old looked;—"I do think, that with such a wife, Godfrey's conduct is unpardonable!"

"My dear duck in drab!" we reply; "we have not a word to offer in his defence!—he is a bad dog! But Emma had left him,—and Maria was very beautiful! Surely thou wouldst not have me hang him, dear Ruth? Speak the word!—it is but a few scratches of the pen--and the deed is done!—for here I sit the only judge."

"No, I would not have him hung!" exclaims another love in 'lute-

strings; "although his conduct is very improper. But I do think solitary confinement for a few weeks in the Penitentiary would be the means of bringing him to his senses, and teach him to value such a wife as he has got. And as for Maria, why I would——"

"Stop, my love! and fancy, for a moment, that it is yourself, instead of Maria!" we exclaim. "Supposing you to have fallen (pout not your pretty lip—angels fell before you—aye! and in love, too); and supposing that your only fault was in loving—'not wisely, but too well,' what wretch would be found cruel enough to punish you for it? Not us!—we would pity and forgive you—then hand you over to Heaven! We could as soon punish a three-weeks-old 'babby,' as a 'beautiful and repentant woman! As for Godfrey! we would give the rascal a fair trial,—make him take his oath to speak only the truth—allow him no counsel, but Love—then leave him to defend himself before a jury of ladies,—all 'women every inch;' and for two farthings we would endure the punishment they would sentence him to. Maria should stand beside him during his trial—not Emma—no, no—we would not stand that! No Emma, if you please, ladies of the jury! besides, she loved her husband too well to appear against him. She would never come into court."

There is an old play, written by one William Shakspeare, said to have been the son of a wool-stapler, of Stratford-upon-Avon; it is entitled 'Measure for Measure.' The son of this poor wool-stapler, seems to have known something about the human heart: he was rather clever—was this William Shakspeare. His works show that he possessed some merit, no small share of talent, and a great deal of true genius. In this old play, above-mentioned, there is a young man, called Claudio, whom we will suppose to be 'Godfrey Malvern;' and a young woman named Juliet, who, for argument's sake, we will call Maria—our Maria: her judge is a Duke. Hearken, for a moment and hear how Godfrey, alias Claudio, is sentenced to death! and how sweetly Maria pleads for his life.

PROVOST announcing JULIET, says—

"Look, here comes one; a gentlewoman of mine,
Who falling in the flames of her own youth,
Hath blistered her report: She is with child
And he that got it, sentenced:—a young man
More fit to do another such offence,
Than die for this.

DUKE. When must he die?

PROV. As I do think, to-morrow.—[*To Juliet, who now enters*
I have provided for you; stay a while,
And you shall be conducted.

DUKE. Repent you, fair one, of the sin you carry?

JULIET. I do; and bear the shame most patiently.

DUKE. I'll teach you how you shall arraign your conscience
And try your penitence, if it be sound,
Or hollowly put on.

JULIET. I'll gladly learn.

DUKE. Love you the man that wronged you?

JULIET. Yes, as I love the woman that wrong'd him.

DUKE. So then, it seems, your most offenceful act
Was mutually committed?

JULIET. Mutually.*

DUKE. Then was your sin of heavier kind than his?

JULIET. I do confess it, and repent it, father.

DUKE. 'Tis meet so, daughter: But lest you do repent
As that the sin hath brought you to this shame,—
Which sorrow is always toward ourselves, not heaven;
Showing we'd not spare (even) heaven, as we love it,
But as we stand in fear,—

JULIET. I do repent me, as it is an evil,
And take the shame with joy.

DUKE. There rest.
Your partner as I hear, must die to-morrow,
And I am going with instruction to him.—
Grace go with you! *Benedicite!* [*Exit.*

JULIET. Must die to-morrow! O, injurious love,
That respites me a life, whose very comfort
Is still a dying horror!

SHAKSPEARE.

CHAPTER XLI.

SHEWS HOW GREGORY GRUFF WENT IN SEARCH OF THE MOTHER OF THE 'BABBY;' CONTAINING ALSO AN ACCOUNT OF WHAT HE FOUND, AND WHAT HE LOST; AND HOW HE STILL ENTERTAINED A MOST ORIGINAL NOTION, OF CONTRIBUTING TO THE HAPPINESS OF OTHERS.

MANY were the scrapes Gregory Gruff got into, while searching for the woman, who had left him in the omnibus to take care of the 'babby.

* I have in a former Number put this defence in the mouth of Isabella. It is uttered by Juliet.

He seldom went out without meeting with some one whom he fancied resembled her; and the consequence generally was, that he got together a crowd, got himself abused, and more than once was given in charge; nor could the magistrates restrain their laughter, though they instantly liberated him, for they saw at a glance, that he was a fine, noble-hearted, foolish, odd, old gentleman. Straight-forward and honest in his own intentions, he could not conceive how he could give offence to any lady, by putting to her the simple question, "Pray, ma'am,—I beg pardon; but did you not, by mistake, leave a child with me, on such a night, in an omnibus?" So he would at times accost the ladies,—his hat off, and his manner most respectful, he, poor soul, never imagining, for a moment, that he was doing anything wrong. Sometimes he found a patient listener, one who, struck by his gentlemanly bearing, heard him to the end of his story; but more frequently, he either got quizzed, or was called an insulting old villain! and threatened to be given into the custody of the police. Many of the lowest order of women, who lived in the streets adjoining his own residence, had become acquainted with the history of the baby, and would at times waylay him in the streets, offer him their little dirty children, and ask him what he would charge a week to take them in to dry-nurse. Others were sent to his door, to obtain tickets for the Lying-in-Hospital; and many a knock came to enquire if Foundlings were not taken in there, and done for. For days, Gruff took no other exercise but swearing; and his wife kept herself in excellent health, by blowing the people up. Rumour did say that the clerks employed in the house where Gregory Gruff banked, were at the bottom of all this; if so, they kept their own secret.—Many a ludicrous scene, however, occurred before Gregory's lodgings, in Finsbury Square; for ten in the morning was the time which the wags (whoever they might be) had appointed for all who had children they could not keep, to attend; with those who promised soon to contribute another loyal subject to her Majesty's very numerous family. And so sure as Gruff opened the door, so sure were half-a-dozen squalling children to be presented to him, amid groups of mothers, married and single, young and middle-aged; besides others, who had not yet attained the happy state of carrying one in the arms, and leading another by the hand; although many have since arrived at it, and have lived to bless the day they first met with Gregory Gruff. It at last got rumoured abroad that Gregory was worth a million of money, and would provide for all the children that were consigned to him; nay, some averred that he had taken an immense house at Hampstead, hired no

end of nurses, and that the mothers were allowed to visit their children every Sunday, when a most excellent tea was prepared for them.—Many, of course, who had been compelled to put their children out to nurse, thought this a most admirable investment, and repaired to Finsbury Square, forthwith. Gruff was no longer in need of 'babbies.' For many a morning did a crowd gather together, to witness 'the fun.' In vain did Mary show herself at the first-floor window, with the boiling kettle in her hand. Mrs. Gruff bawled from the balcony, until she was hoarse;—and what were one or two policemen to such a crowd? If Gregory came forward, with his hat off, and, bowing to the motley group below, commenced with "My dear, deluded friends——" why, the infants squalled, and the boys huzzaed, and all his eloquence was wasted on the wind; for not a word that he uttered could be heard. Others, again, came to have their Nativities cast—a terrible life did they lead the kind-hearted old Gruff. But when the door opened, although the footman kept guard, with a stout stick, and Mary, with a long broom; while Mrs. Gruff occupied the back-ground with her fingers ready bent; still it was warm work, for Gregory to escape. And the recommendations each gave with the child she was so eager to get rid of, caused Gregory sometimes to run off, with a finger thrust in each ear. "It's had the measles, sir," cried one; "never cries of a night," said another, holding an infant up who was giving a specimen of what it could do by day; "It's neither father nor mother,—bless its heart!" echoed a third; "It's scarcely any trouble at all!" chimed in a fourth; "Poor thing! I wouldn't part with it!" muttered a fifth in a low voice, kissing the child as she spoke,—"but I got rid of nearly every thing I had to bury its mother with; and if it was not that I hear I might see it once a week——"

"Here—damn it!" said Gregory, cutting her short, by thrusting a sovereign into her hand;—"the devil!—I cannot father all your 'babies!' Good God! woman! I should have to build a town, to hold the half of those that are brought to me. I wish to Heaven, I were rich enough, I would erect a city, and wall it round so high, that you should have all the squalling and screeching to yourselves. It was a good notion—that building of Babel, with the nursery at the top, and a deaf and dumb asylum beneath: an old man might have lived there in peace, if he had only occupied a third or fourth floor. Damn it!—my house is not a Foundling Hospital!" So saying, he would hurry off, and run, as if for his life, along the Square, followed by the crowd! the carriers and carried,—all contributing their little harmony,

until he found peace in a cab, as he was borne, with many a jolt, over the pavement.

But Gruff was not a man to be daunted by trifles like these; if he failed in the accomplishment of an object, he attributed it to his own mismanagement, consoled himself with the thought that he had not gone about it in the right way; and instead of giving up the matter in despair, as many a poor mortal would have done, he sat down to devise some new and original plan, which he felt convinced must be successful. "I have not been cautious enough," argued Gregory to himself; "I have been too open—too harsh—too severe. Kindness must succeed. I will appeal to the maternal feelings, even as Solomon did, when he judged between the two women: this will bring them over to confess. I have hit upon it at last!" And Gregory rubbed his hands with delight; for he felt certain that he should now discover the mother of the child.

So the honest old man perambulated the streets of London, taking care, however, to steer a wider course from home; and staring with might and main in the face of almost every woman he met. "What an impudent old fellow, that is!" exclaimed one; "I think he must be out of his mind!" said another; "I believe the old fellows are more brazen than the young ones!" cried a third; "It would serve him right to slap his face!" muttered a fourth; "I'll go back, and ask him what he means by it!" chimed in the fifth; and she was as good as her word; for walking rapidly past the old man, she drew up full in front of him, and said, "Pray, sir, what did you mean by looking me in the face just now?"

"No offence, ma'am!—humbly beg your pardon," replied Gregory, taking off his hat, and bowing to the lady. "Am very peculiarly circumstanced—have been looking for a lady for several weeks past—fancied you resembled her. Would not for the world wilfully insult any lady!" and he placed his hand on his heart, bowed again, then walked away. He was sincere in what he said.

"He's some old fool or another, depend upon it!" said the woman, joining her companion. "Perhaps some smart-looking young fellow has run away with his daughter. But he is a gentleman, however."

Gregory hurried along in the direction of Fleet-street, muttering to himself, "must be more cautious!"—and with this resolution, he passed through Temple Bar, finding no one who particularly arrested his attention, until he came to the passage which leads up to St. Bride's

Church, when his eye caught a rather pretty-looking young woman, gazing at the splendid engravings which ornament the corner window. One print, in particular, seemed to have attracted the young lady's attention: it was a very finely-executed line-engraving of a Mother and Child. "There's something in this!" said Gregory to himself; "I could almost swear to her figure!—deal of colour, too, on her cheeks—not much dressed like a mother in trouble, either; but this may only be a disguise—I'll speak to her!" No sooner said than done; and Gregory thrust his face very close to the same pane through which the young lady was looking at the print, though she did not gaze so fixedly upon it, but what a closer observer than our friend Gruff would have detected certain wandering glances cast out of the corner of a pair of very handsome eyes, whenever any well-dressed gentleman chanced to pass.

"Very pretty subject, that!" remarked Gregory, looking as if he had at last discovered a mare's nest; "It appeals at once to the feelings. I should say no mother who had lost a child could gaze on such a picture as that without recalling her loss." While he was speaking, a young thief stole Gruff's pocket-handkerchief, and shot off round the corner.

"Very pretty, indeed!" replied the young lady, smiling sweetly, and giving Gregory divers expressive looks; then pumping up a sigh which seemed to say, as plain as sigh could speak, "Oh, you dear old duck!"

"I believe I am right, this time!" thought Gregory; "she sighs!—there must be something in it—I could swear it's her—she's the very image of the child!" and he again proceeded, "Perhaps you never knew the loss of a beloved object—one that had been dear to you,—and——"

"Indeed, I have, though!" answered the young lady; "but never of one that I could——oh!" and she again brought her eyes to bear upon Gregory; then, looking at the engraving, said, "You are a love!"

Gruff thought she meant the child in the engraving; and, looking at it again, said, "Yes, you are very lovely! They must have been very hard-hearted indeed who could forsake a being like you!" Thus encouraged, the young lady took hold of Gruff's hand, and pressed it rather hard, then managed to raise another sigh, as she said, "Many a one, more lovely, has been forsaken,—and will again——"

"But the pangs they must feel, who have left such to the mercy of strangers," continued Gruff,—making sure this was a home-thrust —"must be very great! I know not how they can rest in their beds!"

"You are a droll, old hand!" thought the young lady to herself; "and I must humour you." Then speaking aloud, she said, "Talking is but dry work; and only to think about these things, makes one melancholy. Come round here, where we can have a glass of wine together. You are a dear old fellow, and will stand one, I know. I'm sure you have a feeling heart!" and she slipped her arm through Gruff's, and led him up the court.

Gregory only replied by saying, "I hope I have, and a forgiving one too, when I find the offender really penitent."

He is religious, thought the young lady, "I must go upon a new tack, and gammon the old boy." She led the way down a neighbouring street and into a very comfortable parlour. Gruff had been walking for two or three hours without partaking of any refreshment, and when she proposed a pint of sherry, and a few sandwiches, he raised no objection to the proposition, but rang the bell and ordered the waiter to bring in lunch. When the waiter entered, the young lady raised her fore-finger—in answer to which the waiter touched the right-hand side of his nose; but all this was unperceived by Gruff.

The order was executed, and they were again left to themselves; for Gruff expressed a wish that no one might be allowed to intrude upon their privacy. At which the waiter winked at the young lady, and bowing to Gruff, said, "Oh, no, sir! certainly not, sir! by no means."

"And now, my dear young woman," proceeded Gregory, making sure that he had at last found the mother of the child, and speaking, as she was taking up a fourth sandwich, having already drank three glasses of wine before he had finished his first glass? "Be not offended, nor alarmed at the question I am about to put to you. You were in an omnibus several weeks ago with a child, were you not?"

"The dear little duck! what of it?" inquired the lady, filling her fourth glass. "I hope it is very well. You're a dear old dad! But I saw it written in your looks."

"It is well!" answered Gruff sternly; "but how could you be so unfeeling as to act so unmotherly, so unnaturally, and to leave it to the mercy of a stranger! It is not in my nature to hurt a woman's feelings; but you—you are not a woman!"

"Don't say so, dad! don't speak such cruel words!" continued the

young lady, throwing her arms around Gregory. "I knew the little dear would be well taken care of. I saw at a glance that you were nothing but a duck! Bless your old heart! I loved you at first sight, as they say."

"The wine makes the poor creature talk in this wild and unfeeling manner," thought the kind-hearted Gregory, allowing her to retain his hand. "Perhaps she did, many have told me that I am the very picture of a good-natured old fool! I know it, I know it! What business had I to take notice of either her or the child? Others were wise enough to leave her alone; but I, I must be meddling! Well, I have found her at last—nothing like appealing to the feelings—better than all the police. They may call me a fool if they like!"

Oh, Gregory Gruff! what a small portion of vanity makes a man blind! Thou wouldst not have minded maintaining twenty children for the same given number of months, if at the expiration of that time they had been instrumental in fulfilling some one or another of thy many most original crotchets. Bless thy kind old heart, it was made to be imposed upon! And thou didst know it; and even at the worst didst console thyself with the thought that 'it was to be!'

"You seem very much excited," continued the good-hearted old man, raising her head from his shoulder as he spoke; "I knew you would be—it is natural! very natural!"

"I am," replied the gipsy, pretending to wipe her eyes, for she had been shaking with subdued laughter while leaning upon his shoulder; and this good old Gruff had attributed to maternal emotions, and his kind old countenance beamed again with mingled pity and pleasure while he held her hand within his own. "I am," said the young lady, making a good apology for a sigh; "I will go upstairs and bathe my face, then I shall feel better," saying which she slipped off a rather dashing-looking shawl, which when new had cost ten shillings and ninepence, and left the room.

Gruff filled himself another glass of wine, and sat revolving within his own mind how he could best serve her. "I will get at the whole history of her life when she returns," said Gregory to himself. "She shall not be left to want. If I find her worthy, I will adopt the child, and she *shall* still be its mother! Mrs. Gruff must become pacified at last. Poor girl! she seems very deficient in education; but I like her simple way of speaking. Heigho! she saw I was a good-natured old fool! but I never wish to be otherwise."

He began to think her a long time, looked round for a clock, and

not seeing one in the room felt for his gold-repeater.—It was gone "Some rascal in the street has got it at last," said Gregory; "they have had a many tries." He pulled the bell, and enter waiter, saying, "Your pleasure, sir?"

"Will you be good enough to inquire how the young lady is?" said Gregory, "and tell her if she feels well enough I should like her to accompany me home to dinner."

"The young lady, sir?" echoed the waiter, looking as blank and innocent as a roguish waiter can look when he likes. "The young lady got into an omnibus half an hour ago, and must be at the West-end by this time. Four shillings to pay, sir! and what you please for the waiter!"

Gregory Gruff uttered but one word, as he sprang from his chair. It contained three distinct syllables, and ended with—'nation!' He thrust his hand into his pocket as if he meant to reach his boot. He was about to throw down his reckoning like a man who has some cause for being in a passion, and shows the first symptoms of it by the way in which he pulls out his purse. But Gruff had no purse to vent his wrath upon—it had vanished. He thrust his hand into his coat-pocket, determined to take a savage pinch of snuff. Alas! his silver snuff-box had gone also. In a word, he was 'cleaned out!' and left without a shilling to discharge his reckoning.

It is impossible to describe Gregory as he stood at that very moment. But his brow relaxed gradually as he felt himself 'done,' and another of his original notions for ever overturned.

Turn we to a young gentleman, accompanied by a beautiful lady, who at that very time entered the parlour. "We shall have rain, Maria," said the young man, handing his fair companion a chair, "and the omnibus will be near upon half an hour before it starts.—John, bring in half a pint of sherry and a biscuit. You look, love! I have frequently taken my solitary chop here, when I have been waiting for my proof-sheets at the end of a month. It is a place I prefer, as being less frequented than any other about this neighbourhood."

So met for the first time in London, Godfrey Malvern, Gregory Gruff, and Maria; for she, poor girl, as a relief to her solitude, coveted no greater treat than to accompany Godfrey, though it was only for a walk into the dark, narrow, and thronged thoroughfares of the city, so that she might be with him.

Gruff noticed not the situation of Maria; indeed, her large black silk-cloak did much to prevent its being noticed, even had a more

acute observer than our kind friend Gregory scrutinized her appearance. Forgetting all about his losses, he made but one spring towards the chair in which Godfrey was seated, and seizing both his hands within his own, exclaimed, "My dear boy! where, in the name of the devil, have you been all this time? God bless you! God bless you! I would rather have lost ten thousand pounds than missed meeting with you! And this handsome yonng lady," continued the kind old man, raising his hat, "a friend of yours? You must both dine with me to-day! I will have no nay, Godfrey! Excuse me, ma'am, I have no son! this is the only boy I ever cared to own!" and the good-hearted old man slapped Godfrey on the back as he spoke; then added, "but he has been very unkind to his old father, very, very!"

If ever the blush of shame mounted the cheek of Godfrey Malvern it was at that moment. He would have buried his head 'full fathom five' in the earth, if he could then have done so. As for Maria she changed from 'fire to ice, from ice to fire!' She had often heard Godfrey talk of his friend Gregory Gruff, and she knew that this was the man. Godfrey rose, and returned the warm-hearted greeting; and while Gruff threw his arms around him, and clasped him as he would have done a long lost child, two big tears traversed in silence the now pale cheeks of Godfrey Malvern!

'Love is strong as death, and jealousy cruel as the grave!' but the fetters forged by the hands of society are stronger than either. They make us slaves to an unseen power, and we prostrate ourselves before a shadow,—a grim Banquo that disturbs every banquet; then vanishes as he came, invisible, and leaves us staring in astonishment upon one another, as if each said, 'Thou canst not say I did it!' Godfrey could not accept the invitation, for he could not take Maria with him! and he had too great a respect for her feelings to send her home in an omnibus—to leave her in solitude aud sorrow, while he was making merry with his friend. He was still too honourable a man to slight the woman whose happiness he had ruined for ever, to leave her to herself, when he knew that the only comfort she could now find in the world was in his society.

Gregory Gruff was so straight-forward and honest that there was hardly a grain of suspicion to a full stone weight of the man. He never saw any thing wrong until he felt it, and even then it had to be cudgelled into him; and when Godfrey declined his invitation he stared for a moment in silence, then exclaimed, "Not go with me?

then I shall with you! that is," he added, his good nature again predominating as he sunk his voice, "unless you have some particular business to do for that young lady, who is really so very beautiful that I would run to the world's end for her. You seem troubled, my dear friend," continued Gregory, placing his hand on Godfrey's shoulder, "confide in me. What is it? You know there is nothing in the world I would not do for you. By the way, how is it you have not drawn upon my banker lately? You know I gave you an order not to spare me. Surely you have not been so proud as to despise the aid of an old friend, when you know nothing would give me greater pleasure than to place the whole of my funds at your disposal! What is it, my dear boy, that troubles you? Come, tell me," added he, seizing Godfrey's hand, and pressing it with a fatherly feeling between his own.

"I cannot tell you," answered Godfrey, "I dare not tell you. Leave me, my dear friend. It would but pain you to know. God bless you! Maria, we must begone."

"You shall not go, by G—!" exclaimed Gregory, seizing Godfrey by the collar. "You shall not go without me, I will know the worst!" Then turning to Maria, he said, "My dear young lady, I entreat of you to tell me what it is that causes this young man so much trouble. I am an old man, somewhat hasty at times, and very foolish. But were he my own son his happiness could not concern me more than it does.—Godfrey, you are a fool!" But Maria had buried her face in her handkerchief, and was weeping bitterly.—"There is something wrong, Godfrey," continued the kind-hearted old man. "Why is this young lady crying? what have you done to her? I will know all before I leave you," added he more sternly. "I know my dear Emma has long been away from you. Do I guess rightly,—this young lady has since occupied her place?"

"She is, indeed, very dear to me!" replied Godfrey, in so low a tone of voice, that his words were only just audible to Gregory.

The old man dropped his hand in an instant, worked himself into a towering passion in a few seconds, then glanced at Maria's countenance, and again became cool. "And you, my dear young lady, do you really love him?" inquired Gregory, looking at her 'more in sorrow than in anger.'

"I do," whispered Maria.

"Then God help my poor dear Emma!" exclaimed the old man. "But

how came she to leave you, sir?" continued Gruff; "was this young lady the cause?"

"She was not," answered Godfrey, his pride now bridling up; "she left me because her father's hall afforded her greater comforts than her husband, with all his industry, could procure for her."

"It's a damned lie!" exclaimed Gregory, "I know her better; it's a lie, sir! She's an angel!—and you are a villain!"

"No man ever called me a liar and a villain to my face before!" replied Godfrey, his countenance changing to the hue of crimson; "nor should you, but you are an old man, and it would but disgrace me to strike you."

"Old, am I!" answered Gruff, beginning to pull off his coat; "not so old but that I can stand up before you, especially in a cause like this. Come on, sir! come on! I've two reasons for fighting you. First, for speaking falsely against your wife, one of the best women in the world; and secondly, for winning the affections of this young lady, when you knew you were married. Old, am I! d—n you!—come on, sir!"

Gruff squared capitally—he jumped here and there, almost as nimbly as a young man of twenty; but still with all his passion he could not find in his heart to strike Godfrey; indeed the latter offered no resistance. He might have smote him on the cheek: Godfrey would not have returned the blow. Maria arose, and stepping before Gruff said, "I only am guilty! if you must strike, let it be me!" She would have sunk on the floor in another instant, if Gregory Gruff had not caught her in his arms.

"I am an old fool!" exclaimed Gregory, cooling down again in a moment, while with one hand he poured out a glass of water, and held it to her lips. Then looking at her face attentively, he said, "I forgive you! Godfrey, give me your hand! If I look at her much longer I shall be in love myself!" and the old man kissed her forehead; and when she opened her eyes, he said, "Well, d—n me! they can't hang you, Godfrey. God bless her! it's a bad job!—such a face would get an angel into trouble! Come, sit down, my dear, I must go home with you—and I will! She had no right to leave him—none—they were both fools—and you, my dear—But Godfrey is a good fellow—Kiss me—I am an old fool. I'll be a mother to you—I mean—damnation—don't cry—It's only another baby—well—well. If it were not for Mary, and my wife, I would—now don't be silly—He's a sad dog—very clever, though—pretty verses—pretty woman—very natural, very." And the kind old fellow put on his coat, asking

Godfrey to lend him a helping hand with it, as he said, "To think of my fighting with you, Godfrey! I wonder what the devil I shall do next! But, come, we must have a hackney-coach—for leave you I will not. By the way, I have got no money!" Godfrey had, and this led to Gruff's narrating his adventure in the omnibus, how he came in possession of the child, and what scrapes he had got into through endeavouring to find its mother. "Here is her shawl, however," said Gruff, taking it up; and when Godfrey paid the reckoning, Gregory ordered the waiter to call in a policeman. It was some time before one came, but he did come, although the interval which elapsed from the waiter's starting off in search of him, to the time when he made his appearance, was ample enough to have allowed half-a-dozen murders and as many robberies to have been committed, and to have given the perpetrators of the same a good chance of escaping. Gregory told the policeman what had happened, described the woman and the watch, and named as nearly as he could the sum of money his purse contained.

The policeman examined the shawl, and said, "It's rather a fashionable pattern among ladies of that sort just now; but I think Bill, who comes on my beat, knows something of her. I'll ask him to-night."

Gregory gave his address, and Godfrey ordered the man a glass of brandy-and-water; then with Maria got into a hackney-coach, and accompanied by Gruff they drove off to her lodgings. Poor Maria threw her head back, and felt very faint, while she heard Gruff expatiating on the many virtues of Emma; but the kind old man wound all up by saying, "Were she not already your wife, I know no young lady in the world that I would sooner see you married to than the one now seated beside you." Then in his child-like simplicity he added, "But surely you can marry her too; no one need know it but myself. You are bound to do it, if it can be done; it's the only recompense you can make her. I have heard of such things. Allow me to consult my lawyer to-morrow. I will provide for her."

The dear old fellow never once thought of transportation, but leaning back in the coach began to meditate how he might best broach so delicate a matter to Emma, without 'wounding her feelings.' God bless his old face! we would not have seen it scratched for the world; but as sure as his name was Gruff so sure would Emma have torn his eyes out had he once alluded to such a subject. They at length reached Maria's lodgings, much to the astonishment of the landlady, who marvelled greatly at seeing Gregory Gruff, and thought 'it must be the doctor!'

CHAPTER XLII.

CONTAINS A FURTHER ACCOUNT OF HOPKINS' INTERVIEW WITH SQUIRE INGLEDEW,—AND TERMINATES IN A WAY WHICH THE READER WILL DISCOVER BEFORE REACHING THE END OF THE CHAPTER.

WHEN Emma rushed into the room, Hopkins instantly relaxed his hold: had he retained it another minute, Squire Ingledew would have lain stretched out at his feet—a corpse.

"Oh, my father!" were the first words Emma uttered, as she bent over his groaning and prostrate form; then, looking at Hopkins, she said, "For God's sake, tell me what has happened!"

"Ask him!" was the only reply Hopkins made, as he turned round, and stood gazing out of the window, as if nothing had gone wrong.

Emma rang the bell, and by the assistance of a servant, placed her father in the easy chair. It was several moments before he recovered himself; and when he did return to a full consciousness of where he was, he motioned the servant to bring him a more enlivening draught than the cold water which his daughter had been holding to his lips. The man understood the sign, and soon returned with a tumbler of cold brandy-and-water, which the squire emptied at a draught. As for Hopkins, he stood by as unconcerned as if nothing in the world had happened.

How is this?" said Emma, looking from one to the other, in astonishment. "What brought you here, Mr. Hopkins? Has anything befallen my husband? Speak, father!—why do you allow this man to stand here, and at liberty, after what I have just witnessed?—What is the meaning of this?"

"Meaning! my dear?" replied Hopkins, with an apparent coolness that even startled the squire: "Your father and I are old acquaintance. We were but trying one another's strength, were we, Squire? The last time he called upon me, we had a similar tussle; he had me down, then. I should have won this bout, had it not been for you!—ha! ha! ha!"

And he laughed,—a deep, savage, hollow laugh!—emitted from

between his clenched teeth,—which fell more horribly upon the ear of the squire, than if he had given vent to the bitterest curses he could have uttered.

Emma looked at her father, naturally doubting the truth of what she had heard; nor could her astonishment exceed that of Hopkins, when the squire answered, "It was nothing more!" She again glanced at Hopkins; and her cheek blanched when she beheld the grinning smile of mockery, which lighted up, for a moment, his startling features—it was an expression which no countenance but his own could have worn; for on it was written, Hatred, Vengeance, Contempt, and Triumph! There was hatred, in the furrowed brow,—vengeance, in the clenched teeth—savage and unforgiving vengeance,—contempt, in the curved smile of the lip,—and triumph, in the deep-set and flashing eyes. That countenance expressed every passion which he at that moment felt—it was awful only to look upon. He knew he had won the victory. He felt Ingledew under his foot, and stood as if he trampled upon a serpent.

"This is not all!" said Emma, taking up the pistol. "Father! whatever misunderstanding there may have been between you, I entreat you to acquaint me with it. Is it about my husband? Dearly as I love him, and undutiful as I have been to you, father! still, I am your child. To me you were ever kind. For the sake of my dear, departed mother, tell me all! I know there is something wrong. Mr. Hopkins, I never did an injury to you or yours. Your wife confided to me many of her secrets. You have children of your own. For their sakes, take pity on me! I believed, until now, that in you I had found a true friend!—in my prayers your name was never forgotten. What can be the meaning of all this? You have not told me the truth, father!"

"You had better leave us," said the squire; "there is—or, rather, there was—I mean, my dear, that there once existed—a little—that is —tell John and James to be in readiness, to answer the bell. And do not alarm yourself—no words, my dear, but leave the room. You never disobeyed me—but once; and that you know, I have forgiven you." He kissed her as she departed: then, unlocking a drawer, drew out a loaded pistol, and, with the muzzle pointed towards Hopkins, motioned him to a seat.

Hopkins, meantime, had stood with folded arms, as if he had been a mere spectator of the scene. True enough, his countenance changed, while listening to the simple appeals of Emma,—but he answered not

a word; and when she had left the room, and he saw the squire take out the pistol, as he beckoned him to be seated, Hopkins made no remark, but, taking his seat beside the table, drew out a similar weapon, and examining the priming, looked at the squire, and said, "All right, Ned! but I am cooler, now, and seek not your life. Had you kept your promise, I should have kept mine. Now I will unearth you; the world shall know what you are! You should have added murder to have filled up your long catalogue of crimes! But that was not to be, Ned! You did lead your best benefactor into ruin, broke his heart, and buried him; then robbed the child that the dying man entrusted to your care!—he perhaps is now wandering a beggar in the world, while you are revelling upon his just rights."

"I plead guilty," answered the squire, after a long pause, placing the pistol upon the table, and pressing his hand to his forehead; "I would to God, that he were here! I would no longer withhold his just rights from him. I should be happier than I am now, were I the lowliest labourer, employed to earn my bread by the sweat of my brow, and to toil on from day to day, upon this estate. I know you cannot believe me, after what I have done, though, I thank God, that you are sitting before me, alive; and that I have not to add to my many mighty sins, your blood upon my hands."

Hopkins gazed upon the squire in astonishment; for he doubted the truth of what he heard: then pointing to the pistol, said, "Were we alone now,—supposing it was midnight,—and the place the middle of Abbey Wood,—and that weapon, which I suppose to be loaded, in your hand, would you not, Ned, send me to my long home, or leave me to babble my secrets, if I could, with a good, round, bullet-hole, through my heart?"

"I swear, before God, I would not!" answered the squire. "My own life I would defend, were it attacked; but never more will I attempt——"

"Murder!" said Hopkins, finishing the sentence, and taking up the squire's pistol, as he spoke; then added, as he rose from his chair, "The odds are in my favour now, Ned! but I am not a man of blood, an by your leave, I will place these dangerous gentlemen side-by-side in the drawer together. They are apt to come into one's head during an unpleasant conversation, especially, when we know that they lie ready at hand. There,—I will keep the key for you, until I depart," continued Hopkins, putting both his own pistol and the squire's into the drawer; then locking it, and thrusting the key into his pocket,

" And now, since it is drawing towards dusk, you may just as well let one of your long-legged footmen run down to the Brown Cow, or we shall soon have more company, unless you have no objection to seeing your old friends from the Borough—I mean those to whose care you was kind enough to consign me; for they came here to keep me company."

" They do not know me?" said the squire, turning pale as death; " but you have told them all!" added he, in a faltering voice, and trembling from head to foot, while he awaited Hopkins' answer; " Oh, God! what misery have I not plunged into!"

" I have told them nothing, Ned," replied Hopkins; " but I left a note, which at dark was to be opened, in case I did not return; that note would have revealed everything. Had you shot me dead, your secret would have been known to three, instead of only one.—Give me a pen and paper, and let your footman run, as if the devil were at his heels. The sun will soon be hidden behind the wood. But I will try you, once more!"

Hopkins hesitated, as he spoke; then again, added, " Quick [illegible] we may yet be too late!" and speaking, as if to himself, said, " I shall still have the same hold on him after all—It's no matter."

Never did Squire Ingledew leap up with more alacrity from his chair, when, in his money-making days, he raised his patron f[illegible]-hundred pounds, and put him down debtor one thousand, than he did at that moment, to unlock his writing-desk, hand Hopkins paper [illegible]d pen, and stand with the blotting-paper ready in his hand, to dry what was written. Hopkins took up a pen, and wrote as follows:—

" FRIEND DICK,

" Send back the note, I left with you, by the bearer: ask him no questions. Drink and make merry—all is right. I shall be with you in the course of an hour or two.

" Your true friend,

" JOHN HOPKINS."

The note was then addressed to 'Dark Dick, at the Brown Cow;' and the footman had orders to deliver it to no other person. " How long will it take you, going and coming?" enquired Hopkins, as he handed him the note.

" About twenty minutes," replied the servant, wondering at Hopkins' impudence to question him, a gentleman's servant.

" Then do it in a quarter of an hour, and you shall have a sovereign when you return," said Hopkins.

"To which I will add another," rejoinca .ne sr·'ire.

Although there was no time to saddle a horse ·ohn had but little difficulty in catching a shaggy pony, which was allowed to graze in the park; and on his back he leaped, laid hold of the mane, and, setting his long legs to work, was outside the park-gates in two minutes, and at the door of the Brown Cow, in three more. A group of boys were playing before the door; and the unexpected appearance of such a steed and rider furnished them with additional merriment. Dark Dick stood on the threshold, watching the sinking sun, and ready for action as soon as the twilight began to deepen. He held the note Hopkins had entrusted him with, in his hand, and was just then hesitating whether or not to break the seal, thinking to add, by way of excuse for his haste, "I might not be able to make it out after dark."

Bill had thrown up the window, for the evening was rather warm; and while he sat beside it, smoking his pipe, he overheard the following brief dialogue.

"Is there a gentleman here named Dick, 'Dark Dick?'" inquired the footman as he laid hold of the pony's ears, to pull it up.

"I am that gentleman," answered Dick; "what's your will, Mr. Lick-plate?"

"I am sent with a note, which must be delivered to him only," answered the footman, swallowing Dick's taunt, and consoling himself with the thought of the reward. "But I must be certain I deliver it to the right gentleman."

"Let me look at the direction," said Dick.

The footman produced the note, and showed the address, while he still retained it in his hand.

"It is for me," replied Dick; and breaking the seal he perused the contents; then said, "Here is your answer ready written. Though, d—n me, if I had thought he meant dropping upon me so soon, I would ——," and the remainder of the sentence he kept to himself. The footman reached the hall within the given time, and threw down the note upon the table. Hopkins took it up, examined the seal, and exclaiming, "All's right!" gave the man his promised reward; and as he was about to leave the room, said, "You may as well bring in a little brandy-and-water. What say you, Squire, to a parting glass? Will you join me?"

"Willingly," answered the Squire: then again remained silent, his head sunk on his bosom, and his hands folded, as he sat with his elbows resting on the arms of his chair. He had not spoken a single word

during the quarter of an hour which the footman was absent, while on his errand to the Brown Cow.

"Come, look up," said Hopkins, mixing himself a tumbler of brandy-and-water. "You see a living man has turned out to be of less trouble to you than a dead one. Would you like to read the note?" added he, holding it out at arm's length, as he raised the glass to his lips. "And yet it would only make you more miserable. The directions are very plain, and I left another paper at home in case of an accident. Men swear you bargained with them to murder me—old woman in the workhouse—parish register—child packed off—Ned Stocks—steward—name proved—Squire Ingledew—Sutton-cum-Bottesford.—Plain, as two and two make four,' continued Hopkins, a horrible smile playing about his lips, and his keen searching eyes fixed on Ingledew as if he would look him through. "What do you mean to propose? Come, let's strike a new bargain. Honour among thieves, they say. This time, Ned, I will have it in black and white."

"I am entirely at your mercy, Mr. Hopkins," answered the Squire, "and have nothing to say in my defence. I have resolved to seek out the young heir, and if he can be found, to restore to him the whole of this estate, for it weighs upon my heart like a mountain of ice. I thank you for your forbearance to-night; and if you will but send these men back to London, without disclosing to them who I am, you shall never have cause to regret your kindness. Half of what I have shall be yours. As for my daughter, she will never forsake me! unkind although I have been to her."

"Nay, d—n it!" said Hopkins, the name of daughter softening in a moment the hard iron of his nature; for he could not forget Emma's kindness to his wife—"Nay, I will not drive so hard a bargain with you, although you did your best to get me murdered! Ned, I am not quite a savage, and am willing to listen to any thing in the shape of reason, though when I think of the many days and nights I was kept a prisoner in that cursed room, with only a dark dead wall to look at, where I sat for hours and counted every mouldering brick within sight, numbered the broken tiles that strewed the damp, narrow, noisome passage, the bottom of which the fresh wind had never blown upon for years, long years. No wonder, Ned, it makes my blood boil, and my fingers itch to be again at your throat. But for the old woman and Dark Dick, what should I have been now, Ned?—a cold corpse in that damp deep cellar, and the hungry rats digging down for me! My wife a widow, my children fatherless, no one to protect

them; and you, Ned, a murderer! living in this fine old hall, and your knees knocking together whenever the wind blew and the trees waved; and starting up in your bed and looking on Jack Hopkins with his brains ——! Nay, old fellow, don't shake so—it has not come to that yet; but no thanks to you. Come, fill your glass, and drink with me, and you shall not find me such a bad fellow after all. Here, drink out of mine ——." Hopkins handed to the Squire his own glass; and, although his arm shook, Ingledew emptied it at a draught, then held out his hand and said, "Forgive me!"

Hopkins paused a moment, his brow lowering, and the ridgy furrow seaming his forehead, as he turned away his face, and said, "No, Ned, I will shake hands with your daughter before I depart, not with you—if I forgive you, it must be through her!"

Meantime Emma had hurried down to the village, and summoned the kind-hearted old clergyman, for she knew something was wrong; and just at that moment Parson Preedom entered the room.

Never in his life did Squire Ingledew rise up to receive the old man with such warmth and sincerity as he felt at that moment; never gave his hand so earnest and heart-felt a pressure as he did that night; and when he introduced Hopkins, the kind old parson shook his hand with a feeling of real friendship, as he said, "I have heard mention of your name before. My darling Emma (God knows she is as dear to me as if she were my own daughter,) has told me how kind you have been both to her and her husband in London, and I thank you for it. God will reward you, my friend! Kindness is mercy and charity, it is akin to pity and all other good and heavenly virtues. And as Shakspeare says, for he often elbows in between many a holy text:—

'The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes;
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.'

"I am really glad to meet you, Mr. Hopkins, especially as the friend of my daughter's father (I have called her daughter from a child). Pardon me, Mr. Ingledew, if I envy you the possession of such a daughter. I once had one, who, had she lived, might have been like her. 'But the Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'" And the good old man looked up towards heaven as he spoke, while two big tears coursed silently down his thin care-worn cheeks.

What a change was wrought in that ancient apartment in a few minutes. An hour before, and there was all but the death-struggle, every bad passion awakened;—and now it looked like the abode of peace; for Emma and her baby were there, and our poor dear Cinderella sat in a corner nursing the child. And Emma, sweet Emma! hovered to and fro like a thing of light, made the parson a glass of weak negus, took such a drink from Hopkins' glass as a bird would from a brook, leant upon her father's shoulder, hung round the parson's neck, and kissed his dear thin old studious face! And Hopkins forgot his vengeance, it was the happiest evening he had spent for years. They wanted but Godfrey to complete the picture; and such a scene of apparent comfort could only have been found in England. Hopkins had shaken hands with the Squire twenty times, had nursed Emma's child, and thought of his own, until not an atom of vengeance lingered in the heart of that hard and iron man. Parson Preedom was the good spirit, and reigned over that scene, which had so recently presented only violence and revenge, until his own gentle nature instilled itself imperceptibly into the hearts of those two sinners, while they drank together, and vowed eternal friendship. Nay, the Squire was carried away by his feelings so far, that he at last said, "I wish Godfrey were here, my reverend old friend should marry them once more, and I would give Emma away myself."

Alas! Godfrey was with Maria! She was dearer to him every day. He loved her sincerely.

CHAPTER XLIII.

IN WHICH WE ONCE MORE LEAN TO THE WEAK SIDE—PRODUCE MANY REASONS, AND BUT FEW PROOFS—ATTEMPT THE ARGUMENTATIVE, THE DESCRIPTIVE, THE PHILOSOPHICAL, AND THE PATHETIC, AND SUCCEED IN MAKING OUT—ANOTHER CHAPTER.

"He loved her sincerely," were the very last words of our last chapter. We would have borne his punishment for 'two farthings,' was our boast in a previous page. So we would if a jury of women could but have seen into his heart, and felt the remorse which daily and hourly fed upon him, and seemed to prey upon his very soul,—

not a word will we retract which is written in this volume. Was Godfrey Malvern happy with Maria? Oh, no! he was a man with all his failings. He might have headed the list of villains, and written his name 'right noble'—he might have been happy had he been her husband! Was he sorry for what he had done? Had you put an axe in his right hand, and bared his left arm, and convinced him that by severing it, he might have undone the past, he would without hesitation have struck the blow. Was he penitent?—very penitent! but still he loved Maria. He had ruined a beautiful and virtuous woman—he was very penitent. Had he forgotten Emma, his affectionate wife? Oh, no, he had not forgotten her! he could never forget her; although she had left him, he still knew that she was his wife. Had she never left him, although he might have flirted with Maria, he would never have fallen—he never could have looked in Emma's face had he known Maria, while she was with him; or had it been so, her gentle nature would have prevailed, she would have reclaimed him. It was Emma's seeming neglect which caused Maria to cling to him more closely;—they were both deceived! Did not the vow he had made at the holy altar, when he married Emma, haunt him like a ghost? No! for he believed that she had forsaken him because of his poverty, that she had broken her holy vow, not he. There was a foolish sincerity in his sin, a blinded vengeance, which he mistook for the just retribution of false-sworn love, a payment which folly demanded in the name of disinterested affection! This is false reasoning, though nevertheless the reasoning of a misguided human heart. The world may censure us, we care not! Is it unnatural? Is there no reason in our madness? God is witness we have but copied human life. The turf is yet green and delicate upon the grave that covers *our* Maria! Four springs have not yet shaken their showers above it!—the daisies that grow over it dreamed not they were destined to become the sods of death, when, four winters before, the frost whitened above their hidden roots in a lovely meadow.

The human heart is naturally prone to err; the judgment, warped or misguided, like the central movement of a machine, throws the whole action wrong; but there is a wide difference between wilful and determined error—vice sought out and embraced through the love of evil only—and that which arises through circumstances, and springeth from events which before were utterly unforeseen; and Godfrey Malvern would as soon have thought of his head parting from his shoulders, as of Emma leaving him when she did. His pride was wounded at

her father's neglect; and when his wife proposed returning to the very man whose silent contempt had stung him to the soul, then his heart cooled towards her, although, deep beneath, and it might be at times unknown to him, there still burnt the unextinguishable fire of true love. He tried in vain to stifle it! In the still midnight it many a time broke forth, and shot up with a blaze that paled the lesser glow lit by poor Maria. But pride came, and kept the purer flame down, though it never could silence the sighs and the struggles which the pent-up passion made to break forth—the volcanic fire slumbered within, and was ready at any moment to rise red and ruddy, and with redoubled force, above the dark summit of the crater. 'The marks of that which once hath been,' still remained there, although Godfrey Malvern regarded it not.

Many of our fair readers have startled at the position in which we have placed Godfrey with Maria. God bless them, one and all! He was too good a fellow to commit murder; and highwaymen are out of fashion!—as to a gambler it is an old vice. We disliked making him a monster, so turned him into a man; his heart good, his judgment blinded, and his very failings human. We wish he had been better; but such as he is, with all his faults (without swerving to the right hand, or to the left), we will follow him step by step to the last page of our volume, conscious within ourselves that our intent is good, and our object right MORAL.

Godfrey kept nothing secret from his friend Gregory Gruff, but drew so strong a picture of his attachment to Emma, his struggles to render her comfortable, and his happiness amid all privations, while shared with her, that the kind old man, although he blamed his conduct, promised him forgiveness, and above all swore that Maria should never know want, on condition that he again became reconciled to Emma. Further, when Gruff found that the funds he had intended for Godfrey's use, had been drawn by another party, he began to think that Emma must have endured many hardships in London, such as one so delicately brought up, as she had been, could not well brook; and that it was but natural she should again return to her former home when invited by her father, especially in the situation she then was. Here the good-hearted old man did injustice to the motives of Emma. After his reasoning had once set in, in favour of Godfrey Malvern, off he went at a hand gallop, for Maria had made a great impression on our friend Gregory. Her destitute situation—the sacrifice she had made for Godfrey, with no selfish object in view—

nothing but misery and ruin staring her in the face :—her character lost—her prospects in life for ever blighted! and yet clinging fondly and madly to the man who had brought her to such utter desolation, looked very much, in the old man's eyes, like disinterested love, such as he had rarely met with in the world. Had Godfrey been single, Gregory would have broken every bone in his body if he had hesitated for a moment to have married Maria. As it was, the fine old fellow was strangely puzzled what to do for the best for all parties. One thing, however, he resolved upon at once. He had plenty of money, and while he lived Maria should never know the want of it.

"I must have Emma up in London," said Gregory to himself, as he sat alone ruminating by the fire, after he had left Godfrey and Maria. "It will never do as it is, they are as fond of one another as a cat is of new milk—it's very wrong,—very, but very natural! I must be cautious, or I shall have a pretty kettle of fish! And what the devil will my wife say if she finds out that I have taken this beautiful and unfortunate young lady by the hand? Swear the child is mine of course! and that hussey Mary is sure to second her in it. Well! well! heaven knows I am innocent! And if I can but bring Godfrey and Emma together again, why Mrs. Gruff may talk and be d—d! Poor Maria! I wish I were thirty years younger for her sake—I would —that is, if—Gregory you are an old fool, and here is another 'babby' for you to father. But I'm always getting into trouble. It was to be—it was to be! And yet I never meant injury to a living soul in my life. It's very strange—I wish the devil had been born under my nativity; and yet he would have made worse use of the malignant aspects than I have done. It's better as it is." Just then he heard the child squalling upstairs. "What lungs the little rascal has," continued Gruff. "I begin to fancy he is either the son of a dustman, or some fellow who cried perriwinkles and water-cresses. A noisy dog! when he grows up I'll furnish him with a stock-in-trade. Mary says he's fond of gin already—he shall keep a dram-shop! Mrs. Gruff says he eats as much as a man. Hang him! he shall have a cook-shop, then he may revel in boiled-beef until he bursts. Poor little fellow! he might have fallen into worse hands after all. Well, I'll do something for him if he turns out a good boy. My planet foretels that I shall die poor!—but what's to be will be, and it's no use murmuring against fate. The young rascal—it's much cheaper keeping him than hunting for his mother! that's a very expensive affair, very!"

So he lit his chamber-candlestick and went to-bed, and there lay

asleep, in a few minutes, as kind-hearted an old gentleman as ever the stars canopied.

And now a few happy days dawned upon Godfrey and Maria, a few brief happy days; for they no longer knew the want of money after their interview with Gregory Gruff. It was autumn then, that calm sweet season, when the trees were shedding their rich summer-garments, when Nature looks lovely as a young widow in her weeds—her skies blue but melancholy—her few beautiful flowers scentless—her grasses rich in their second growth—her woods more solemn than at any other season of the year, when the first fallen leaves rustle along the sylvan pathways, like houseless wanderers who will never have a home of their own until they find a grave in the miry earth!—when the bee and the bird are almost mute, or if the hum of the one, or the song of the other falls upon our ear,—they but tell us of the silence which summer has sunk into, like the shrill treble of old age, instead of the joyous shout and the boisterous laugh of green and long-leaved youth.

And at this season Godfrey and Maria took many a long walk through those pleasant meadows, woodland pathways, and delightful hills which stretch along the Surrey-side of London. Months had elapsed since Godfrey had before met Nature face to face. Sometimes they wandered along beyond Camberwell, up Champion-hill, and down Five-field-lane, across the meadows to Dulwich, up the steep ascent of the wood, and along the Hog's-back, with Sydenham stretching at their feet; while broad and far beyond, to the utmost verge of the sky-bound hills, slept in the sweet autumn sunlight the rich counties of Kent and Surrey, with the white spire of Beckenham church peering above its clustre of tall trees; while farther off dimly gleamed Sevenoaks, and to the left rose Shooter's-hill, with its towered landmark, that rises high above proud old London. They had but to turn their heads and there lay the world's great capital, the huge metropolis of England with all its smoke and all its sorrow—all its gold and all its griefs, the home of wealth and want, the city of palaces and prisons appearing like a dim picture; for not a sigh, nor a groan, a laugh or a merry shout, reached the silence of those green hills—the great home of graves slept in the distant sunshine, as if it had indeed been a city of the dead. Godfrey halted on the brow of the hill which overlooks London on the one hand, and on the other commands a wide view of the beautiful landscape of Surrey and Kent. Maria leaned upon his arm; and while he held her small, delicate hand

within his own, he drew her attention towards the huge city, which seemed bounded by Westminster Abbey, on the one hand, and on the other by the old Tower, beyond which stretched many a steeple, while the dome of St. Paul's rose high in the centre, and looked proudly above the busy, money-getting mart of the world.

"There lies the home of kings," said Godfrey, pointing to Westminster Abbey;—"there sleep the Sons of Song, amid brave Warriors, and mighty Statesmen; Princes, and Heroes, whom Death found in the foremost ranks of battle: the stormy-strife is now over, and their long slumber tranquil as that of an infant, who hath known no sin. Virtue and Vice sleep there, Maria, side-by-side; those who have loved, and erred, as we have done, have long been deaf to the censure of the world—neither praise nor blame can affect them now—the long, silent night of forgetfulness has gathered over their graves—the brave and the beautiful have crumbled into dust. Still, the world rolls on merrily around them; and Pomp sweeps by, in stately trappings, with head erect, as if he had never heard, that the end of all things is the grave. How tranquil and lovely is all here, Maria! the jingle of sheep-bells in the distance, the grating sound of the heavy wagon below the hill, the faint voices of children, just caught, then lost again, as they mingle in merry play, in the village-street; and now, all again is still; the very lowing of the red cow, from yonder distant meadow, seems to make the repose more silent, as if there was but one voice audible in all the vast landscape. How different, at this moment, are the scenes in yonder busy city!—what a jostle and a turmoil rises into the air, and rends the smoky canopy, which here seems like a dim-blue mist, hanging over an hundred thousand indistinct homes. What thousands are plodding yonder weary streets, on good or evil missions! marriage bells, and funeral knells tolling together—the bridal party perchance stepping aside, to allow the bearers of the dead to pass. The undertaker busied with his coffin, and only thinking of the sum he shall receive for his labour—the condemned murderer, whose very hours are numbered, startled from his reverie, by the swell of music, as some light-hearted group sweeps past his prison. The thief prowling for plunder, seizing and spending the little sum which the charitable bearer had intended to relieve the wants of some poor creature, stretched out, sorrowful and penniless, upon a bed of death. Oh, what mirth, and misery, does yonder curtain of smoke cover! A century ago, and it was nearly the same!—a hundred years hence, and what will it then be? Others, perchance, may be standing upon the brow of this hill, as we do now,

Maria, looking over the same scene, and bemoaning the good and evil of human life, while we, trodden down by the destroying foot of time, leave not even a trace of our graves behind."

"But you will long be remembered after death, Godfrey," replied Maria, a faint smile lighting her beautiful countenance as she spoke.—"Many of the poems you have written will be read, when you are no more—treasured in future collections, and handed down to unborn generations, and your name be registered on the roll of Fame."

"I had once such thoughts," answered Godfrey; "but now they concern me not. What will it matter to me, when I am in my grave, whether I am remembered, or not? If Fame blows her loud trumpet, I shall be deaf to the sound. If some future critic holds up my works to the laughter and scorn of his readers, all will be lost upon me: such things have moved me but little, while living—the dead they cannot affect. No, Maria! if I am remembered, it will be through thee! our names will be woven together in some weary tale of melancholy love, and be read by stealth, by those, who, while we were living, would hold themselves contaminated but to breathe the air that we are breathing. Not that these thoughts make me love thee the less; but, if aught, more. The world will pity thee, Maria!—me, it will hold up as a villain! So let it be; the worst record it can engrave upon my tombstone, will be that Godfrey Malvern sinned in loving Maria."

"Yet those who read it," said Maria, looking up through her tears, "will remember Burns; and while paying the tribute of a sigh to your memory, say,—

'Is there a man, whose judgment clear,
Can others teach the course to steer,
Yet runs himself, life's mad career,
Wild as the wave—
Here pause—and through the starting tear,
Survey this grave.—

'The poor inhabitant below,
Was quick to learn, and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow,
And softer flame,——'

No, Godfrey, I will repeat no more: the 'thoughtless folly' was mine; and will, ere long, 'lay me low.' Before you knew me, there was nothing to 'stain your name;' but, alas! I have blotted it with my love. I have been very happy with you; and, although it will grieve me to leave you, I grudge not the price I must pay—it 'll be a

broken heart, and an early grave; for I shall not live long to trouble you. You will live happy with your injured wife, when I am dead—and sometimes—sometimes think of me, Godfrey! Sometimes visit this spot alone,—and stand where we now stand,—and remember that it was here you once stood with your Maria. Nay! come hither, Godfrey! let us sit upon this little rounded embankment, it may be a landmark, that will, in after years, guide your memory to my grave; for I cannot live long. You will never forget me, love!" added she, smiling through her tears. "I know you have a gentle heart!—to me you were ever kind—even your anger sprang from love. Keep this in remembrance of me, Godfrey. I give it you, here. Look at it when I am dead; and whenever you visit this spot, bring it with you. Emma will forgive me, when I am in my grave."

She gave him a little packet; it contained a long lock of her own dark hair, and another of her mother's, one on which she had vowed her innocence before God, when Godfrey, in his jealous anger, did her such grievous wrong. Poor Maria! she had never loved but him; and his heart now acknowledged it.

It would have pained any one, who has a heart that can feel, to have witnessed the deep misery of those ill-starred lovers. Two nobler forms never trod the earth; for youth and beauty were theirs. In him was revealed all that looks majestic and manly; in her, the very grace of loveliness. But, looked at through the distorting glass of iron society, they were hideous monsters—guilty wretches—children of sin!—and so are we all.

Great World!—a word with thee! Maria was not naturally bad! she never forgot that she was a woman, nor conducted herself otherwise than as a lady, even when she had fallen. Yet she could not have been admitted into select society, on any terms. He might. How is this? I will tell you, most fashionable, and mighty world: I will speak out, most select, and uncharitable society! for I value not your heartless ceremonies the worth of a straw. The noble-hearted, the kind, the forgiving, the generous, and the charitable belong not unto you.—A woman, who has fallen, ye would spit upon! As for a man, it would but be a titter, a whisper, a look, and he would be forgiven. What a page of proofs could I produce, were I so minded! Women of England! high-born and lowly, this is your greatest failing. Oh, that ye would but remember yourselves!—your loveliness, your weakness, your susceptible and affectionate natures. It is yourselves I pity, not

your betrayers. To yourselves ye are false! and the time will come, when the lines I have here written, will be admitted as truth.

Close your doors upon the seducer; let him not defile the air ye breathe; shut him out, as you would a deadly serpent; speak not to him; smile not upon him; never admit him into your presence; and the evil is remedied. Teach man that it is his duty to resist, not to tempt and ruin a confiding woman. The remedy is in your own hands. Guilty we are all by nature; but it is in your power to make us hold your sex guiltless.—Your mercy leans to the wrong side!—you are unjust towards yourselves. A woman! Oh, women! is one of you!—she is your sister! A young, lovely, confiding, tender-hearted woman, is an angel, compared to a man! yea, although she may have murdered the wretch who betrayed her; yet you, for her first transgression, close your doors upon her for ever!—him you admit! You give shelter to guilt, and shut out injured innocence. You hold the keys of Paradise, and shut out the good, penitent, and contrite spirit, admitting only the hardened, the unchanged, and the unrepentant seducer, who makes his guilt his boast, and glorieth in his very shame.

"It is a pity," says an old writer, "that love, which is the holiest passion of the soul, should meet with so many who corrupt it, who mislead its own pure inclinations, and turn the spring-head of goodness into a channel of evil; but the passions are no further distant from vice, than they are from virtue: as in the confusion of chaos, fire and water were mingled together, so is evil with good; and from these fatal mines dross is drawn out, as well as gold. Man ought therefore to be ever on his guard; for his every action contributeth either to happiness or misery: he bears within his bosom life and death, and it behoveth him to be as circumspect in his comportment, as one who walketh on the edge of a precipice."

Here then, is a goodly sermon, in a few brief sentences. Woman is shadowed forth under the similitude of love, and the spring-head, or fountain of goodness. Man, as the polluter of the pure stream, who turns it from its native course, into evil and corrupt channels, such as (but for him) it could never have flown into. Woman, in her natural state, is a shy, and retiring creature: Heaven clothed her with modesty as with a garment: her form is very tender: she is subject to soft emotions: tears, sighs, smiles, and blushes, become her only;—even her voice seems akin to pity. She is, by nature, one of the gentlest of God's creatures—she is so affectionate, and tender-hearted. And can such a being as this become totally changed in her nature, after she has

been betrayed and seduced by man? Can such a blight, all at once, have fallen upon her, as to deaden all these virtues—these angel-like attributes, and cause her to be shunned, by her own sex, like one smitten with the plague? Oh, horrible!—most horrible!—when this shy, this weak, retiring, and affectionate creature most needs the help of her sister-women, then is she spurned, and slighted, meets only with withering and scornful looks; while scarcely one says, from her heart, "I pity thee!"

Thank God, this is not the case amongst the poor! there the open arms, and the sympathising tear, are ever to be found; they forgive, as they hope to be forgiven; and when her tears and sobs have subsided, her misery renders her doubly dear to them. Woe be to her betrayer! Never again dare he to 'darken her door,' unless he come in all humility and penitence; even then his reception is more severe than the 'blackest frost in the deepest winter.'

Change the scene to the highest society: bring forth the fallen beauty among dignitaries and honours—and death would be happiness compared to her reception. Can it be that we all sprung from one sire? Is there no difference in our flesh and blood? Will the same rude blast awaken us all on the last awful day?—Will there be no silver trumpet, with a softer sound, to arouse the silken sons and daughters of the great, from their slumber? or will they be left, like Commodore Trunnion, to 'lie still, and be damned?'

CHAPTER XLIV.

SHEWS HOW THE VERY BEST FRIENDS CANNOT ALWAYS AGREE,—THAT 'SUSPICION EVER HAUNTS THE GUILTY MIND,'—AND THAT IT IS 'NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND.'

WE left Dark Dick about to re-enter the parlour of the old Brown Cow at Sutton-cum-Bottesford, where Bill and Sam had been enjoying themselves to their heart's content, until he again joined them; for Bill, be it remembered, had witnessed the reception and re-delivery of the note; and he began, in vulgar parlance (which is at times very expressive), 'to smell a rat.'

"Jolly news!" said Dark Dick, throwing down the note; "here,—

read it,—'Drink and make merry—all 's right!'—so says the governor. And I guess that means, there is plenty of tin in store. Here's to you, old fellow." So saying, he took up the remains of Bill's glass of brandy-and-water, and emptied it.

Bill, in the meantime, had taken up Hopkins' brief note, had read it through, and now sat with one eye closed, while he puffed out huge volumes of smoke; and, after some deliberation, he said, "And what the devil was the note about he left with you,—eh, Dick? It must have been of some consequence, through sending for it in the way he did! You read it, of course?" This was put in the way of an interrogation, or not; for Bill was, in the slang phrase, 'a downy cove.'

"I never read it," answered Dick; "I wish I had, now. But it's no use wishing when it's too late. Besides, you know what a way Hopkins has had of late, of looking when he speaks to you—I dare not read it!"

"Dare?—the devil!" replied Bill, emboldened by the absence of the master-spirit; "why not dare? Dick, you are not the trump I took you for. I would have read it, in spite of him! What is he, after all? Besides, it might have given us a clue as to how he raised the ways and means. You are a fool, Dick!" So saying, he rang the bell. Sam sat by and said nothing.

Mrs. Tomlinson answered the bell, and Bill enquired whose servant that was, who rode up on the pony. The landlady, of course, answered, "Squire Ingledew's." Bill gave a low, long whistle, as she left the room; for he remembered that name, as a passport to divers checks, which had been converted into cash. "But for your cursed fear!" continued Bill, "we should have had Hopkins safe. That note, I feel sure, contained all I have so long wished to know. Think you, this Squire Ingledew would have sent him such sums as he has done, lately, were there not some secret to be kept? I would wager my head, if it were loose, that it was somebody belonging to him who came about that little affair in the Borough.—Dick!" added he, turning, with a fierce look, as he spoke; "you are at the bottom of this secret! You have been playing foul with us! By G—d, you have!"

Dark Dick defended himself in no very measured terms; and not content with daring Bill to do his worst, taunted him with certain mean and selfish actions, and accused him of retaining more than his share of the booty, which they had obtained by false play. "You know, old fellow, you tried me on with the loaded dice," continued

Dick; "and twice of late, when we have been playing a friendly game, I have detected you using double aces: such things Hopkins never did towards a chum. I have long since found out what your honour is; I am not to be gammoned, Bill, so do as the devil directs you."

"I have long since seen how the game has been played between you and Hopkins," retorted Bill; "but, cunning as you think yourselves, I hold that in hand which may yet win the last trick. You have ever been a cringing, double-faced thief, since he became so flush of money, and have sold us to him, to serve your own ends! You knew the contents of that note well enough—you know you did."

"If I did," replied Dick, "I shall keep it to myself; get at it, if you can. As to calling me a thief! I consider it to be a more honourable profession than that of a cheat, and a liar!—both of which you are!"

"Say that again!" exclaimed Bill, rising from his seat, and attempting to look very fierce, though his lips were pale, and his heart sunk within him; for he was brave only as a bully:—"Say that again, if you dare!"

Dick also rose from his chair, and drawing closer to his opponent, repeated the accusation, his eye fixed firmly on Bill as he spoke, while the latter quailed beneath his look; and again seating himself, said, "I will have my revenge for this!" and he ended with a bitter oath.

"Have your revenge!" echoed Dick; "you poor pitiful coward! Take it now like a man—this is a good spacious neighbourhood, plenty of room, and no fear of the police coming up to separate us. What! you will wait until we get to London, eh? Poison my grog, if ever I give you chance, or indulge in a sly stab when my back is turned, and so treat me as you did your poor old mother-in-law. But remember, old boy! there has long been a halter round your neck, that I hold one end of it, and can draw it tight at any moment I like."

"Come! come!" said Starlight Sam, who was not a man of many words, "let this drop. We have had enough of it for one night. If there is any ill blood between you, turn out and fight, I will see fair play on both sides." But these were terms Bill refused to accede to. So they sat quarrelling and drinking until near midnight, about which time Hopkins returned.

We have before stated that Hopkins had of late obtained a great ascendancy over his companions, so much so that his word had become law. They might grumble, but they obeyed him. When he

entered the parlour, Dick acquainted him with the cause of their quarrel, and made known how Bill had got at the secret of the note, while looking out of the window. Bill made the best defence he could, and Hopkins listened until he had done speaking, before he turned round upon him.

"So you would have made yourself acquainted with the contents of that note, would you?" said Hopkins, regarding him with a stern withering look. "Poor pitiful scoundrel! I have long since discovered your character! Do you think me idiot enough to trust such a treacherous coward as yourself with any secret, that I value the worth of a shilling, or that I care for the worst you can do? I will show you what store I set by you either as a friend or a foe! There is the money to pay your fare back to London. The mail will pass by this door within a few minutes. You may either go by it, or remain where you are. That sum is the last you will ever receive from my hands! Dick, you have acted like a man! give me your hand. And as for you, Sam, whether we are to be acquainted in future or not, will depend upon your shunning for ever his society;" and he pointed to the crest-fallen Bill as he spoke.

Bill made no reply, but sweeping up the money, emptied his glass, and waited in sullen silence the arrival of the mail. There was but one outside passenger—so he took his seat, and clenching his fist at the house (for not one of his old companions were polite enough to see him off), he was speedily borne off in the direction of London. Sam, meantime, had retired to rest; and Hopkins having told the landlady that he was a friend of Squire Ingledew's, had prevailed upon her to let them have a bottle of brandy before she shut up the bar. So, saving the ostler, who was asleep in the kitchen, he and Dick had it all to themselves.

"Bill will never forgive us," said Dick, first breaking the silence; for Hopkins sat absorbed in deep thought; the events of the last few hours had wrought a great change in him. "I know my man! ever after to-night he will prove a bitter enemy."

"So let him," answered Hopkins; "we shall be upon our guard. He would make the devil more evil than he is, were they to become companions. We must get the old woman out of his hands. What became of that poor girl and the child? Do you remember how in his drink he boasted to us, that he had made her take a solemn oath to throw it into the Thames? You must try to discover her, Dick—Sam will be of assistance to you. Bad we all have been, more or less, in

our time; but we have still this comfort,—we have prevented much evil from falling upon others, through our acquaintance with this villain. To you and Sam, and the old woman, I owe my life—I shall never forget it! But remember, Dick, that from this hour we cease to be what we once were. If matters turn out as I expect they will, it may be in my power to serve both you and Sam. God is witness, although I followed vice I never loved it. I have often resolved to become a better man, and failed;—from to-night I begin in right earnest!"

"You were never very bad!" replied Dick; "and had I taken your advice from the first, I should now have been a happier man. But what is it you propose to do? I know not how a tavern-waiter's life would agree with me now; but heaven keep me from a night-house and gamblers!"

"Amen!" said Hopkins; "there is yet much to do. But ere long you shall know all, if you prove faithful."

So they passed the time until long after the 'witching hour' of midnight; Hopkins, for the hundredth time, resolving to become very virtuous—a reformation which he generally commenced by getting very drunk 'upon the strength of it.' Dick was, if anything, the furthest gone of the two, though he managed for a time to keep somewhat of a sedate and stupid countenance, by hanging down his head, and fixing his half-closed eyes on his glass, while Hopkins from time to time gave his pipe a flourish, and proceeded with his oration as follows:—

"Not, Richard, (he was very drunk) that I think we ought altogether to deprive ourselves of the glass, Richard, but to take it in—moderately strong—that is, Dick, not to put an enemy into our brains to steal away our mouths. Moderation breedeth virtue. I have written it many a time at school—large-hand copy; and Temperance is—I have never wholly forgotten it, Richard! (he drained the bottle as he spoke). I may say that it has—that is—I mean (he attempted to light his pipe by holding the head three inches from the candle). Besides, virtue is commendable,—that means it's not bad—and the good we do to others is to ourselves—which is, Dick, that whilst we strive—for instance, now, supposing A says to B, well C, my boy, I did you wrong, and L answers, I forgive you K. Isn't it pleasanter than for G to go and seek—injury forgiven; and E shakes hands (Dick had by this time fallen asleep). Besides, as the parson put it, you shall see him—though Ingledew said—I had the best of the argument. Hopkins, says he, d—n you, Jack; but he didn't swear! The passions, said he, are ninety—no, nine (and he began to number his fingers).

Love—that's one—now keep count Dick (Dick snored, while the Ostler stood with the door a-jar, and his mouth distended to a broad grin, for he had looked in to see if they were not ready for bed): Anger—yes, that's three—then phrenology, which he said was the—I forget—but I think—the oasis of—that is the affections—making nine—(he let his pipe fall). You understand, Dick —!" and he raised the glass to his chin instead of his mouth, poured its contents down his waistcoat, missed the table by at least six inches as he attempted to set the glass down, which, by its fall, awakened Dick. It was with some difficulty that the Ostler got them upstairs to-bed, where for a time we must leave them.

The conversation of the worthy parson had not been altogether lost upon Hopkins, although he so far forgot himself as to get very drunk afterwards. But even through the thick mist of this very drunkenness there was a glimmering of returning goodness—his clouded ideas no longer staggered towards vengeance, as they hitherto had done when his drowned reason struggled with drink. His temper was calmer, his very nature softened, and his savage feelings chastened down. And this change had been produced within a few brief hours, by the 'gentle spiriting' of the kind old clergyman, and the winning innocence of our matchless Emma!

And Squire Ingledew, how felt he after all those varied feelings had chased each other through his bosom on that eventful night? He felt very thankful that his life had been saved—very sorry that Hopkins held the master-key which unlocked all his deepest secrets—deep regret at the thoughts of having to resign such a splendid property as the estate of Sutton-cum-Bottesford—and the heart-ache while he thought of what the world would say to his having ever possessed it! Was there, then, no way to escape this great sacrifice—this deep disgrace? What if Hopkins sent his companions to London? At one puff away flew all the Squire's good resolutions! Hopkins was fond of shooting, could he not when they were in the woods together shoot him—by accident! The evil spirit bundled out Parson Preedom's better angel, and was soon again in possession of the Squire's heart, whispering at the same time, 'Wear mourning for a twelvemonth, go to church every Sunday, provide for Hopkins's family handsomely!—then, Squire Ingledew, the world will look upon you as an angel, especially if you endow a school, and repair the old church!—and many a man pays more than these trifles will cost you, to get a seat in parliament!' 'That's too true, deep Mr. Devil, they pay more for a seat there, than they would for one in heaven! 'What think you, Squire Ingledew?'

—you are now looking out of your chamber-window, the harvest-moon is setting above the tall old avenue of elms which adorn the park,—is it to be *your* park or not? It's only standing a little distance off, starting a pheasant, firing, and hitting Hopkins—by mistake—very sorry! Going down on your knees—squeezing out a tear or two—clasping his hands—sending off for a physician—whining—praying—promising—weeping, if you can, Ned! Never leaving him until he is dead! then sitting down the undisputed owner of Sutton-cum-Bottesford. And your daughter—strange that her youth and beauty, and injured innocence, should possess so much power over you, Ned! Why, man, your hand trembles so much that you can scarcely place the extinguisher upon the candle. 'Put out the light, and then put out'—the dark fiend that inhabits your evil heart, Ned! Your neighbours think you a great and happy man;—a more miserable fellow sleeps not within the lowliest hut, that rears up its thatched roof to catch the first gleam of moonlight that now wanes over the wide domains of Sutton-cum-Bottesford. Good night! and pleasant dreams attend you, Squire Ingledew."

But either Hopkins, or the foul fiend, is again grappling at his throat while he sleeps; or is it fancy that haunts him like an evil spirit? How heavily he breathes! Though the body sleeps, that guilty and troubled soul findeth not a resting-place. Many a tear must be shed, many a sigh heaved, and many a prayer breathed from the heart, before thou wilt recover the healthy sleep, which once settled on thy childish eyelids, Squire Ingledew!

But morning again breaks upon the guilty and the innocent,—the graves of the dead, who are for ever at rest, and the aching eyelids of the living, who are weary of life. Some it awakens to the enjoyment of new pleasures, others to the repetition of daily pain, the cares, the fever, the fret, and the heart-ache, and 'all those ills which flesh is heir to.' Remorse turns on his pillow, while memory gnaws through the very brain, and digs up the folly and madness which darkness and drink had for a few brief hours buried. 'There are none good' who then can greet the new daylight without a sigh! Yet thousands of happy faces come into light at its approach, and many a merry heart bounds blithely beneath the sweet sunshine of morning.

Maria awoke only to weep; day and night were alike dreary to her now; her sun seemed to be setting ere it was noon. Godfrey awoke to grieve over his past follies, and to think how differently he would act, if he had the past to live over again. The past belongs to

the present;—Time dead holds no communion with the living; it is a grave which knows no resurrection.

"This we see, and seeing, sorrow
That the day consumed returns not,
And to-night is still to-morrow,
For nor time, nor life sojourns not."

To Emma morning brought hope: it beamed in her eyes, and upon her brow, like a new glory dropped from heaven. The sin of her husband had not yet extended its dark shadow over her affectionate heart; she was ignorant of the stored-up sorrow which yet awaited her—the doomed misery which lurks in the future, yet unknown—the loosened avalanche which must fall and crush. Morning came to Hopkins with the head-ache, and beamed upon such a mass of confused matter, that his thoughts resembled chaos—they were 'without form and void.' To good old Gruff morning brought an excellent appetite for breakfast; there was not a lighter heart in all London than Gregory's. What cares it carried, like his children's, were all adopted ones. His troubles were borne for the sake of others, for his own he had slept away. True, he awoke, as he always did, with an hundred new designs revolving within his brain; he would be cautious, more guarded, more reserved in his kindness; but before night he was, as usual, taken in on every hand, deceived and laughed at. But, "d—n 'em, I forgive 'em," was Gregory's prayer before he again went to sleep; and he did forgive them from his very heart. The Recording Angel kept no account of Gruff's oaths—his great good heart filled the huge balance-sheet; and as for his sins they were marginal references, which no one cared to read after having perused the beautiful text.

And Squire Ingledew!—what change brought morning unto him? Were his eyes red with weeping, and his cheeks marked with the traces of repentant tears? Not a vestige of either were visible on the countenance of that ambitious and hollow-hearted man. You might as well have looked for the same symptoms on his marble bust, which had cost two hundred guineas, and stood in the entrance of the hall, side-by-side with Napoleon's. There was the old natural grey cunning, playing about his eyes, yet he could make a fair show of weeping when he tried. There was a hard, iron, rigid compression about his mouth, as if his lips would bite one another if they had but teeth; yet those lips could smile, be all blandness, honey and humbug, when a fitting occasion offered. As to a laugh! he had never once laughed in his life, saving at some passing joke, which was of no interest to

himself. Yet he had a deep inward "ha! ha! ha!" of his own, which answered his purpose just as well. No; the devil and he had laid their heads together, in comfortable companionship, during the hours of darkness, and they had decided between themselves, that a little more deceit would answer much better than actual violence, be safer and cheaper in the end; and his Dusky Highness knowing that it would at last just amount to the same, went away perfectly satisfied, nay, delighted. He rubbed his hands until they fairly ignited, like lucifer-matches passed over sand-paper, so great was his joy! And these two worthies (the squire and the devil) had agreed that Hopkins should go in search of George Emmerson, the heir of Sutton-cum-Bottesford,—that every stone he turned up they would quietly bury, until they found one to suit their own purpose, and that should be the grave-stone of the heir. Ingledew was to undo what Hopkins did—where the latter found the least glimmering of true light, the former was to come forward, and make a deeper darkness!

"To dote, yet doubt—suspect, yet fondly love!"

And that morning Hopkins came to breakfast with Squire Ingledew. Oh, how glad the Squire was to see him! The inquiries he made after his health, and how he had slept, &c., actually brought the tears into dear Emma's eyes—she felt 'so happy!' Poor Hopkins! he partook of ham and eggs, tea and coffee, cold fowl and cruelly-cold tongue, and gammon (not of bacon); and Emma helped him to everything that was on the table,—her father to all, saving what he kept to himself. Emma almost loved Hopkins, for she knew that he was about to return to London—would soon see her dear! dear! husband; and she would have sent a kiss by him were it not for shame! Nay, she had resolved within herself to be with Godfrey in a few more days, unless he came down into the country to visit her. Then Mr. Hopkins must take letters with him, and one (oh, happy Emma, what a change!) from her father, inviting Godfrey Malvern to return to Sutton-cum-Bottesford, and to make the old hall his future home. Such was the concession the proud Squire had actually made through the intercession of his matchless daughter! God help thee, my poor Emma! thou seest only happiness stretching before thee, like an interminable landscape, all beauty and sweet sunshine! I see beyond the distant hills that bound the sky, troublous clouds, and traces of the approaching tempest!—thou canst not, dear Emma! My journey is towards the realms of night—thy face is turned to the golden mansion of morning.

"And tell him, Mr. Hopkins!"—God bless thy sweet tongue, my dear Emma! hast thou not already written a letter long enough to frighten old Ritson, did it even contain a full account of the discovery of another old ballad? He cannot remember a tithe of what thou art communicating in thy silver accents. Thy remembrance to his wife and children his heart acknowledges! See he turns away his iron-face. Hopkins has a heart, Emma!

And now he takes a turn round the shrubbery with thy father, who has thrust his arm within the elbow of Hopkins; but the devil has hold of thy father's other arm, although thou canst not see the invisible gentleman. And they are talking of the old woman in the workhouse,—of poor little George Emmerson,—of good Mr. Pashley, whom no one has heard of for some time,—of wills and the Prerogative Court; and thy father's voice is very mild and meek, and the devil is smiling all the while! and Hopkins is swallowing everything as truth, and promising and vowing what he will do when he reaches London, and thy father hopes that he will find the heir—dead! dead! dead! Emma, or not at all. But, hark! a horn blows at the park-gates. It is not the horn of a true knight, come to liberate thee from an enchanted castle, though there are enchanters now, Emma, ay, and deceivers too—friendly-looking, and loving enemies. It is the horn of the guard! Thy father's footman has taken places on the mail for Hopkins and his companions, and in our next chapter they will again be in London! They might be in America, if such was our pleasure, Emma; but we have no business there!

CHAPTER XLV.

IN WHICH WE 'GO TO THE WORKHOUSE,' DESCRIBE A GREAT MANY THINGS WHICH HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH OUR STORY;—THEN ADMIT THE READER TO A 'BIRD'S-EYE VIEW' OF SOMETHING THAT CANNOT YET BE SEEN DISTINCTLY.

EVERYBODY, who is at all acquainted with the Surrey side of London, has seen Camberwell Toll-gate, with its little garden and dusty-looking flowers, which in Summer seem the very colour of the road, as if they had been macadamised by butterflies; for the bees very seldom drive

over them. Gentlemen who keep gigs, or indulge in the exercise of horsemanship, are well acquainted with this gate; for, being a separate Trust, the ticket or number given at the Surrey-gate, is here of no use; will no more clear it than the Dispensations sold by those soul-brokers of the olden time (the jolly old monks), would admit their dying dupes into heaven; for here faith is at a discount. This Walworth or Camberwell-gate (for it is known by both these names) fronts on the one hand the dead wall of a workhouse, on the other, a large gin-palace, while at a little distance rises the tower of a new church, almost grazing a still newer chapel, thus oddly mingling, within the space of a few yards, Diet (by law), Drink, and Divinity. This toll-gate may also be considered as the boundary to Lock's-fields, or Walworth-common, both of which lay behind the gin-palace and the church; and deepen down through numerous dirty streets and unnamed thoroughfares, that lead to—Misery. Beside the dead wall of the workhouse, you may, in summer-time, see scores of poor wretches, basking, half-naked, in the sunshine, and waiting for out-door relief. They lie about the toll-gate, and on the pavement, so thick and close together, that the foot-passengers are sometimes compelled to take the middle of the road, lest in passing by, they should stumble over some one or another of the sleeping paupers; for hunger, rags, and wretchedness often lie down and sleep here, side-by-side. In winter-time they huddle together in the waiting-room, or lie down to warm themselves on the pavement, for there is an oven beneath it. Perhaps the smell of the bread, while it is baking, may somewhat relieve the pangs of their sharp hunger—may—

> "Appease the hungry edge of appetite,
> With bare imagination of a feast."

Sometimes you may see ravenous-looking men, women, and children, devouring the loaves they have just received, while they walk home to their miserable abodes, which stretch behind the gin-palace, the chapel, and the church. At other times you may see two or three men, wearing the hodden-grey dress of the workhouse, coming out of these unexplored streets, bearing something covered with a dirty curtain, looking not unlike a wooden hog-trough; and if you look inside, while the men rest, you will discover some poor creature, pale and emaciated, and only just alive, which they have brought out of one of the miserable and unknown streets in the neighbourhood, and are carrying into the poorhouse to die The large doors of the workhouse open, and the dead, or the dying, are borne inside; and should you enquire

who it may be, no one can tell you; all you are able to learn is, that it is some poor wretch, who lived in one of the ruinous and unhealthy huts which stand like plague-spots beside the reeking, pestiferous and dark stagnant ditches, that fester and rot, and poison the heavy air of Walworth-common, and Lock's-fields, and compared to which the workhouse is, indeed, a paradise. But it is not always in this long hog-trough that the dying wretches are borne to the poorhouse; for you may, at times, see the same solemn-looking men carrying a kind of sedan-chair, covered in with curtains which are the colour of dirty brimstone; and when the wind blows the jaundiced-drapery aside, you may occasionally see such a countenance as can never be forgotten, so pale, so woe-begone, so hollow, spectral, and ghastly, that it will haunt your memory for many a weary night, come in upon you between your dreams and the darkness, and even when your eyes are shut in sound sleep, creep under the closed lids and stare at you. Such a face we once saw, with the reflection of those lurid yellow curtains cast upon it. It was the countenance of a grim, unshaven, hollow-eyed, dark-visaged old man; but perhaps he was dead,—we dared not stop to enquire, but walked on amid the rumbling of wheels, and the busy shouts and stirrings of human life, that whirled past us; and when we turned our heads, the solemn-looking men and the death-chair had gone.

As to the workhouse itself, it wears somewhat of a clean and comfortable look, but those who pass it on foot (excepting on the opposite side of the road), can only see the dead brick-wall by which the building is surrounded. Mounted outside of a coach or omnibus, you have a good view of the building, together with its neat little garden, its clean gravelly front, where the poor paupers may be seen walking, and of the clothes which are hung out to dry, all blowing about, and looking very clean; for here every day, saving Sunday, seems washing-day. You may see old women sitting on benches at the front of the workhouse, poor mothers walking about with their children, in blue-grey gowns, or perchance an old man or two at work in the garden, and all looking as happy and comfortable as broken-hearted poverty can ever be supposed to look. And at times, the poor dear old creatures raise their heads, whenever a coach or an omnibus, or a pleasure-van rolls by, conveying some merry party into the country, to spend the day in the rural neighbourhood of Norwood, or Beulah Spa, or to visit the Dulwich Gallery. And it requires but a slight stretch of fancy, to imagine that there was a time when these poor paupers rolled as merrily by; their

dear, thin, care-worn countenances then lighted with joy, and their too sad hearts, at that time without a care, when they sallied forth into the quiet green lanes, and dreamy-looking old woods, and startled the sylvan silence by their shouts of merriment, but little thinking then that the evening of life would set in so cloudy and dark,—that their meat and drink would be meted out by law, and judges appointed, whose fiat, like that of the Omnipotent, when he gave to the ocean its boundary, should say to hunger, '*Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, and here shall thy proud stomach be stayed.*' They little dreamed the '*days of their years*' would come to this. Would that these law-makers could, for only one week, change places with those they legislate for, lunch upon their own law, and dine on the diet they have provided for others, and that good old Gruff had to give them their gruel! A poor pauper, an' please your honour, has an appetite, as sure as the poor negro had a soul, whose cause Corporal Trim so eloquently pleaded.

Seated on one of the benches which overlook the little garden of the poorhouse, were two old women enjoying the warmth of a fine autumn sunshine, although the evening set in dark and stormy, for it was one of those mild warm days, which break forth through the decay and wane of the year, like the smile of melancholy old age, when the features are lighted up by some pleasant remembrance which recalls all the sunny prime of youthful days. One of the old women held a tin trumpet to her ear, for she was very deaf, and seemed to have 'aged (as it is expressively termed) faster than her years.' Her companion, though much older, had an excellent set of teeth, clear eyes, and a tinge of health upon her wrinkled cheeks, which reminded you of a winter-apple: her voice and hearing were also perfect. Although the deaf old woman pestered her with endless questions, some of which she had to answer three or four times through the tin trumpet, still there was nothing pettish or impatient about her fine old countenance, nor any harsher sentence uttered, than, "Poor old creature, she gets more deaf every day. If I have a hoarseness again this winter, she will have nobody to talk to her."

"What noise was that, Nanny?" enquired the deaf old woman, raising her trumpet to her ear. "Was it the children playing? Bless 'em! I sometimes catch their pretty voices, and it brings the tears to my eyes; and yet I am glad to find that anybody can be merry here. I was merry once; but that's long—long ago, Nanny.—There it is. No, it's not the children. Is it music? Music should not

come here, Nanny. Give us more to eat and drink, and we can do without music. I haven't bread enough, though I soak my crusts. I could eat more bread if I had it, Nanny. But it's a blessing I am not young, nor have so good an appetite as I once had; I don't know how the young people do, I'm sure. But nobody is very healthy here; and that's a blessing after all!"

"There were three pleasure-vans, with a band of music and flags," shouted Nanny; "you might have seen them, if you had been looking. Gone to spend a happy day somewhere in the country—it's late in the season, though. It's a long while since we went to Norwood together. Isn't it?"

"Many—many years ago!" replied the deaf old woman. "We could dance then, Nanny!" added she, a faint smile lighting up her care-worn countenance. "Do you remember John Leighton praising my thin ankles? Poor John!—and to think of meeting him here at last! Twelve months to-morrow since he died. Thirty years ago I danced with him:—it seems but like yesterday, Nanny! Sixteen years since I buried my little John, and the year before that, my husband. Deary me! and yet they go out with music, and take their pleasure, the same as when we were young. I wonder how they can! Hey! I had a new gown on that day; it was light green. Poor John Leighton admired it; and yet he never got married. He called me green-sleeves, Nanny: I remember as well as if it were but yesterday. Well, he's dead. I never went out without bringing him a bit of tobacco. When he got his pipe, he loved to talk about old times. A twelvemonth come Saturday since they buried him.—Isn't it, Nanny?"

"It is by the day of the month," answered Nanny; "though it was on Friday. I remember the day well, because they took us off an ounce of meat on that very day. God knows! we had little enough before. They treat us worse than the poor birds in cages! they have plenty to eat and drink. And I paid poor-rates for above forty years, though I often pinched myself to do it."

"Hey! hey! it's very hard," replied the old woman, dropping her trumpet, and sitting for several moments in silence; "the poor young woman who suckles the child, and sleeps in our room, declares she can scarcely get any rest of a night, she feels so faint and hungry! I have saved her a crust now and then, and the poor thing says she gets regularly out of bed now of a-night, to feel in my pocket for a crust when she feels 'fainty!' And yet I could eat more bread if I had it! It's very hard! I wanted more support when I suckled my

Johnny. And they talk of stopping the four pounds a-year Mr. Pashley allows me! I cannot live without my tea and sugar, and a bit of snuff! and you would sorely miss it, Nanny. If they do stop my bit of money, it will be the death of me! Do you think they can stand by stopping it, Nanny?"

"God knows! they do what they like with us here!" answered Nanny. "But I'm sure they will neither have the governor's nor the matron's consent—she told me so the other day! But here comes the governor, and a stranger with him. He is pointing to you—he wants you," bawled Nanny loudly in her ear.

"Wants me," echoed the old woman: "then they mean to stop it towards my maintenance; but I'll leave the house!—I will, Nanny. I can get a little room for a shilling a-week! Then there's coals and candle, and soap. But I can take in a little washing! and Mrs. Houseman will give me her old tea-leaves, and Mr. Thompson says I may dine with his servant every Sunday; and I shall have liberty, Nanny! But you must live with me, I cannot do without you, and one room will do for us both, and we shall be very comfortable, Nanny."

So the poor dear deaf old creature ran on, making it out that her pound a-quarter was to purchase independence, and every necessary comfort; and that Nanny was also to live with her on the certain income of something considerably less than one shilling per week for each.

That poor old woman had her feelings, 'an' please your honour! she would have fought for the privilege of enjoying her tea, her sugar, and her bit of snuff. She contained all the elements of the anti-corn-law league within herself—concentrated in the love of her tea, her sugar, and her bit of snuff. Similar feelings might have been entertained by William Tell had he been the inmate of a workhouse!

The persons who approached were Mr. Hopkins, attended by the master of the workhouse, who had shown him where to find the old woman.

"That is her," said Hopkins, "I have seen her before;" and raising his voice, he added, "Well, Betty, how do you find yourself? I have come to see you once more, and brought you a little canister of the old sort. Try a pinch, you will find it genuine."

The old woman raised her tin trumpet to her ear, looked at his face, then shook her head, as if to say, "I don't remember you!" took a pinch of snuff, and said, "You're very good! So they've stopped my bit of money, have they? and this is my first allowance!

Well, it's very good of you! I will say that; but where's my tea and sugar? I can't live long without all my little comforts—I feel the want of them more than ever."

The governor bawled into her ear, that her money was not stopped, neither was it likely to be; but that the guardians still permitted her to draw it, and spend it in whatever way she liked.

"Then they are very kind, very!" answered the old woman, puckering her withered features into a sneer. "But no thanks to them—not a farthing of it comes out of their pockets! and yet they're very kind for all that! and we should have no cause to complain, if they would but allow us a little more to eat. But Mr. Pashley would see me righted, I know he would—he wouldn't see a poor old body trampled upon because she's poor, that he wouldn't!"

"She has forgotten me," said Hopkins, addressing the master of the workhouse; "but this Mr. Pashley is the very person I want to find out." Then raising his voice, so that the old woman could hear him, he said, "When did you see Mr. Pashley last? Do you know where he is now? You must remember me, I brought you some tea and sugar, and a little snuff a year or two ago; and we had a long talk about your little Johnny, and George whom you once nursed!"

"Well! so you did," replied the old woman, her features brightening up, as the remembrance of Hopkins's kindness beamed across her clouded memory. "You were very kind to me! And Mr. Pashley, of Clifford's-inn—but I never can remember dates now; and I should sometimes forget when it were quarter-day, only that my tea, and sugar, and snuff gets low, and I say to Nanny it must be near quarter-day by my canister. We keep no note of time here, though I know when it is Saturday by the cleaning, and I can tell when it is Sunday because there are no clothes hung on the lines. But Mr. Pashley left a long while ago. I don't know what's become of him, neither does the porter at the inn; but I receive my bit of money just the same, and that shows he is a gentleman."

"And little George!" continued Hopkins, "can you tell me what became of him? Mr. Pashley knew where he was; for the last time I saw him we were talking of little George. Mr. Pashley enquired after you."

"It was very kind of him to remember a poor old creature like me," answered Betty. "But he told me, the last time I saw him, he was going to see little George. George must be a man grown by this

time Let me see! but I never can remember dates. He was about the same age as my poor little Johnny! and he's been dead—let me see—I remember the day he was taken bad—we had new potatoes for the first time; for George would have one before they were done; and whilst my back was turned he took the saucepan-lid off, and scalded his hand with the steam! I put some brown-soap and sugar on his hand—it's a fine thing for a scald or burn—my mother never used anything else, when any of us scalded or burnt ourselves—and she had a large family, thirteen in all, and they are all dead but me!"

"I must enquire at Clifford's-inn," said Hopkins; "for the poor old woman wanders from one subject to another so suddenly, that I shall gather but little from her." Then shouting again into her tin trumpet, he said, "I want to find out Mr. Pashley; but I'm afraid he is dead. I have enquired at Clifford's-inn, and they know nothing about him there."

"Dead!" exclaimed the old woman; "God forbid! I couldn't live now without my tea and sugar, and bit of snuff. Dead! no, its impossible; and yet I don't know; everybody dies some time or another! And now I come to remember, he did once talk about dying, and gave me a bit of paper—I have it safe somewhere. I think its at the bottom of my snuff-box! But I know it tells me to enquire of some lawyer in Lincoln's-inn-fields; and I did go to look at the house one day, in case anything should happen, and saw the name on a brass plate. I remember it well, because I went down a narrow court from Holborn—Great Turnstile, that's the name! and I stopped to buy some snuff at an old-fashioned looking shop, and very good it was. Yes, Mr. Pashley may be dead! But he said, 'Betty, if anything happens to me, apply to Lincoln's-inn-fields, and you will still get your money.' And he said something about the Prerogative Court in Doctors'-commons, and about his will, and a deal more which I forget. But I do remember his saying I should have my money while I lived. It was very kind of him, to think about my tea and sugar, and my bit of snuff."

Hopkins asked her several other questions, but her answers were so vague and unsatisfactory, that he could elicit next to nothing, unless it touched upon her bit of money, her tea, her sugar, and her snuff. So he resolved the next day to visit the Prerogative Court, and search for the will, before he had even ascertained whether or not Mr. Pashley was dead.

Mr. Pashley had left, and let his chambers in Clifford's-inn; but no one knew where he had gone to. His furniture had been removed

into a lumber-room, where it was left to rot and spoil, for nobody had called to enquire either after the furniture, or the owner The porter had a long tale to tell of his sudden disappearance—the mould and damp which were destroying the beds and sofas, and hair-bottomed chairs; and many a similar story might be told of the different inmates of those silent old inns, who came no one knew from whence, and went away without any one knowing of their 'whereabout.' A fine old chronicle will we concoct, some day or another, connected with the mysterious legends which float about those dreamy, and silent old inns!

CHAPTER XLVI.

CONTAINS A DESCRIPTION OF A NIGHT—NOT THE PLEASANTEST OF THE SEASON,—A LETTER—NOT BROUGHT BY THE POST; AND ENDS ANOTHER CHAPTER, IN WHICH WILL BE FOUND MORE SENTIMENT THAN SUICIDE, AND JUST AS MUCH MORALITY AS IF WE HAD 'DONE A MURDER' INTO ROMANCE, OR GILDED THE TRUTH WITH LIES.

It was night—a night in Autumn, cold, raw, dreary, dark, and rainy, although the very night which closed in upon so calm a day as we have described in our last chapter,—a true emblem of human life—the uncertain calm and the sudden tempest, mingled like colours, in which no eye can detect where they begin, or where they end, for the smiles and the tears of the season, drop from the self-same sky:—it is still the face of heaven, whether seen in sunlight, or in storm. A bitter bleak wind blew from the north; one of those cold, clipping winds which shears Summer of every faded remnant of beauty, and sends the yellow leaves by hosts into deep hollows, there to be rained upon and rotted; and when Winter comes, he finds the work of desolation ready done to his hands, so moans, and blows, and roars over it, because nothing is left for him to destroy; so he whistles through the 'looped and windowed raggedness' of miserable man. It was a night in the month of November, when London gasps for breath, and every street seems suffocated with dense and heavy fog; while on it drives the rain and the wind, as if to wedge the heavy mass more closely together—when old hollow church-yard coughs call to each other across the streets, with a melancholy greeting, while asthmatical people wheeze and blow, as they walk

along with their mouths tied up, as if they breathed through an atmosphere of vitriol. It was that miserable month, in which Englishmen make up their minds to feel perfectly wretched, after they have returned from their favourite watering-places, or from a journey to the sweet, green country,—when they feel dissatisfied with themselves, their shops, their homes, and their streets, so get into dark and gloomy corners, and poison themselves like rats, or hang themselves on old decaying beams, with cold, damp, mouldy ropes; or, with rusty and forbidding-looking pistols, blow out their brains. When the Lord Mayor's Show creeps slowly along through the drizzling atmosphere, or winds up the muddy and slippery streets, while the music falls upon the car like the wailing tones of misery, and people sneeze and cough, stick up their shoulders, and thrust their hands into the very bottom of their pockets, as if they had carried off a thousand colds while waiting on the bleak bridges, and can still feel the breeze that blowed there, creeping through the very marrow of their bones. A night on which the very gas-lights seem to look down with pity and contempt upon the poor street-passengers, as if they, warm and comfortable, and well-covered on the head, and placed high above the mud and grease of the pavement, felt for us poor mortals, in weather-stained macintoshes, and time-worn old cloaks, while, shrouded beneath grey old cotton umbrellas, we go coughing and grumbling along our way.—Such a night as, if a man entertain any thoughts of destroying himself, the wind and the wet beat bang into his ear, and tell him that he will never have a better chance,—while the fog gathers more closely about him, and seems to say, nobody can see you do it. When a man who is compelled to walk four miles, envies the dog which he sees coiled up on some door-step, and feels a strong inclination to roll himself up beside the comfortable-looking brute, and there await the coming of another day. A night, when a miserable man cannot pass a barber's shop, without thinking of the cold blue razor he has left at home; or if he take up a newspaper, begins to look at once for the murders, suicides, and coroner's inquests, and marvels that the paper does not contain more; or if he pass over any one of the bridges, gets upon one of the cold seats, and looks over into the far-stretching fog, feels the wet, chill and clammy through his gloves, while his hands rest upon the coping-stone, and would be tempted to turn a somerset, and bid the world 'good-bye,' were it not for a fear of hitting his head against the buttresses below, or being hooked out again, half-dead, by the Humane Society.

On such a night as this, Godfrey Malvern groped his way home, through the fog, the wind, and the rain, to his lodgings in Lock's-fields, after having had a painful interview with Maria, for she was low-spirited, very sad, and had strange forebodings that she should not live long; for,

———————" Not poppy nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou (once) hadst."—SHAKSPEARE.

Godfrey and her landlady had by turns sat up with her all the previous night; for Maria was very wretched, and afraid of being left alone.

And Godfrey Malvern walked home, very melancholy, his hat drawn over his eyes, his cloak gathered tightly around him, and his thoughts divided between Emma and Maria. Then came other thoughts, such as we have given in the opening of the present chapter; and he halted before the door of a chemist's shop, and wondered whether or not they sold prussic-acid. Poor Godfrey! he began to be weary of his life! he longed to take a leap into the undiscovered dark! Then he thought of his little son, whom he had never seen, of his dear Emma, who loved him so sincerely, and of poor Maria, who, but for him, might then have been all smiles, and very happy; and he cursed Lady Smileall, and her *soirée*, and then blamed himself only, for all the folly and misery he had plunged into. Alas! sorrow and repentance may shine like the winter-sun, over the desolate landscape, but it brings not back the birds, the flowers, and the green leaves, with all the bygone beauty of the scene: if aught, it only more clearly reveals the desolation and ruin it beams upon:—

"Barê ruined choirs, in which the sweet birds sung."

Godfrey never felt the truth of this far-fetched image, more than he did when he reached his lodgings on that miserable November-night, when he saw his wife's letter lying upon the table; and before his imagination there stood at the same time, the image of the miserable Maria. The devil would have pitied Godfrey then, if he had but seen him.

Many of our readers, we doubt not, have long been surprised at the patient endurance of Emma, and considered it very strange that she should so quietly submit to his neglect and absence, without seeking for an explanation from him. All this will, however, be readily accounted for, when we bear in mind the cold distance at which Godfrey Malvern had kept the Squire ever since his marriage, but more especially, from the time when they chanced to meet in Parliament-street,

when Ingledew's imperious and insulting behaviour pierced like heated iron into the proud heart of the young husband, while he resolved within himself, that he would rather beg his bread from door to door, than attempt any further reconciliation with the purse-proud father-in-law. Emma knew well the proud temper of her husband; and was certain that there was no chance of their ever again becoming friends, unless the first approach towards a reconciliation was offered by her father. This she had at length accomplished; and the result was, the kind letter from the Squire, which we have before alluded to, inviting Godfrey Malvern to Sutton-cum-Bottesford, and begging that the past might be for ever forgotten. This, together with the letter from herself, a large portion of which we shall lay before our readers, Hopkins brought with him to London. Both these letters had been lying two days at his lodgings, unknown to Godfrey; and when he returned home, he broke open the one sent by Emma, and read as follows:—

"My own Dearest Godfrey,

"I write to you with a much lighter heart than I have felt for many—many a long day! Do not, my dear husband, cast a sadness again over it, by sending such a brief answer to this letter as you have done to others which I have lately written to you. I know you would not willingly give me pain for a single moment, Godfrey, yet these short epistles have made me very unhappy; but I will complain no more.—My father wishes you to come here, and has sent a letter by Mr. Hopkins, urging your immediate return. If not for his sake, my dear husband, you will, I know, come for mine! and there is another, whom you have never yet, either smiled upon, or kissed,—our innocent child; even he seems to look into my face at times, and to recal the absence of his father, as if he wondered why you kept so long away. Come, my own dear Godfrey, and come quickly!—it will break my heart, if you keep away any longer. I would not have urged your instant return, had not my father wished it: myself I might humble, for the sake of peace, but you I would never wish to see any other than you are. My father has sought your forgiveness; and I want but you to make me happy. Mr. Hopkins has been staying here a short time. I have enclosed you in a separate sheet a few facts, which will, I am sure, astonish you as much as they have done me. I know not what to think of his intimacy with my father! Your clearer judgment will, I know, penetrate through all this mystery. Come, my own love! I have ordered the same pillows to be put on the bed as you first slept upon, when you staid all night at the Hall. You remember the little chamber, the moonlight the mas-

tiff, and the scene in the park. I was a giddy thoughtless girl, then, Godfrey—fond of you even to foolishness; but I am worse now! Do leave London to-night! If you do not, I shall come to you in a day or two. I cannot live without you any longer! But I have told you so an hundred times, and yet you have not come. No one can ever love you as I do, Godfrey! why, then, stay from me so long! Either come, or let me return to London; which I will do, unless you are with me within three more days. Parson Preedom says he shall buy me a widow's cap, if you stay away much longer. Little Godfrey begins to call 'Da! Da!' or I fancy he does, and grows more like you every hour! and the little rogue has got a trick of frowning, just like his papa when he is displeased. Ann says he will turn out a poet. Yesterday he fell asleep, with his tiny hand pressed against his forehead. He reminded me of an absent lover—one I have a great regard for, who is very much given to study—he looked like a little picture of you! I am weary of seeing the moonlight fall upon the unpressed pillow of a night, and shining white and blank, where your dark locks ought to lie. It is a long time since I twined your side-hair round my finger, and made it curl—when you pushed me away, and called me 'a mischievous little hair-dresser,' and I burnt my elbow with the candle while trying to kiss you, and upset the ink over your manuscript. We were very poor then, but very happy, Godfrey! happier than I have ever been since. God knows I left you for the best! Has any body meddled with those side-curls since? I shall put my arms round your neck, and look in your face while you answer me; and if you shift your eyes ever so little, while you reply, I shall kiss you ten times, and believe that you are telling me a story. But I must not be too hard upon you, for you are a story-teller by profession, now. I lent Parson Preedom your new novel: I dare not tell you what he said, it would make you so proud. You know my opinion. I'm afraid, what with the praise of the papers, and the great people you are now accustomed to meet, that the silly hair-brained Emma, who rambled with you among the green lanes, and wild scenes around her own home, will only look like a young ignorant country girl, in whom it was presumption to love you! And yet I do not think so; but I am so happy now, I should like to aggravate you, and be by, to see you frown. I have tried to imitate your frown, and laughed at the caricature which my glass threw back. By the way, what a presentation-copy to send to your wife, 'To Mrs. Malvern, from the Author.' I tore the leaf out, and burnt it. You might have said, from 'her

husband,' even if you had left 'loving' out. I shall pull your hair and bite your finger for this, Godfrey! I shall, indeed. Do come the day after to-morrow, love, then I will not bite it very hard. I shall come to meet you."

More we need not quote; that letter was the true representative of Emma's feelings. Every word of it was dictated by her heart, and in it were revealed her sincerest and deepest feelings. We have seen the original; it contains not one erasure, although there are a few words almost illegible, as if the fair writer in the midst of her happiness had been weeping. The whole letter contains three sides of close writing, and the inner pages are again re-crossed. On the outside is a head cleverly sketched, not unlike Godfrey Malvern, saving that the features are somewhat childish. Some such thought seems to have struck the fair artist, for she has run a border round the face like a cap-screed, as if she had tried to blend the features of the child with the father's.

And this letter had been lying two days and a long night at his lodgings, amid many others, containing flattery, praise, censure, nonsense, matters of business, invitations from *conversazione* cliques, and *soirée* givers, offers from publishers, notices of his novel, compliments from deep blues, with all the pile of blether and Balaam, which inundates every author who has in any way distinguished himself. And during these two days and a whole night he had been with Maria, had borne all her murmuring and her reproaches patiently, well knowing he deserved the very worst which could be inflicted upon him for his neglect to so loving and amiable a wife. He read the letter attentively twice through, half-blinded with his tears! Every sentence of it seemed to pierce into his very heart. Had it been filled with abuse and reproach, it would have had but little effect upon a mind like Godfrey Malvern's. But it was so loving, so real, so like his own fond Emma, that he more than once fancied he heard her voice ringing upon his ear, in one sweet peal of silver music as it had many a time done, when—

"Early love first learnt to lisp its childish creed."

And there sat the poet, the novelist, the man of genius, with his face hidden by his hand, weeping like a child! He, whose name was ringing through the land, whose society was courted by the titled, the proud, and the wealthy, would have gladly exchanged his high estate with the shepherd who tends his flocks all day on the lonely moors, if he could by such an exchange have recalled his former peace of mind. What would Lady Smileall have thought could she but have seen him

then! all her Platonic philosophy would have been of no avail, for she knew not how 'to administer to a mind diseased!'

After a time Godfrey Malvern rose from his chair, and unlocking a secret drawer, drew forth two locks of hair, love-tokens given to him by Emma and Maria. Maria's was dark as death, dusky as the deepest plume of the raven, and glossy as silk: Emma's of a light sunny-brown, producing a variety of shades, just as the light fell upon it; sometimes wearing a hue that bordered upon auburn; then taking a deeper tone of colour like the chesnut, or when placed in the full glare of daylight assuming the softest and richest brown. Maria's was jet-black; place it in whatever light you chose, it still wore the same ebon hue. It looked firmer and stronger than Emma's. You might have concluded from gazing attentively upon the two ringlets, that there was a great difference in the dispositions of the beauties whose heads they had once graced: that one was firm, fiery, and passionate; the other meek, gentle, and forbearing. Nor would the inference drawn have been a wrong one. Godfrey Malvern sat gazing attentively on them both; and while he looked, each character seemed separately to develop itself. Maria at times stormy as the ocean, when the wind ploughs its surface into mountains, then gentle again as the same great deep when it sleeps unruffled by a breath. There was an awful stillness in her very love, a tranquillity like the slumber of a lioness, a proud majesty in her calmest repose, which made you fear the mood she might awaken in! And yet at times she possessed the mournful tenderness of the dove. Emma could be a little Tartar when the fit possessed her; but it never lasted long. Her anger when it leaped forth seemed ever ready to jump into your arms; when she appeared most disposed to bite she was ready to kiss you; and instead of imprinting the marks of her teeth, left only the honey of her lips behind. She could not have sulked an hour if you would have given her the world; while Maria would have sat out the longest summer-day without speaking, if you had deeply offended her; for her temper even at the best was never one of the sweetest. Emma you could love without ever fearing her, for she was ready to 'kiss and be friends' the next minute after you had quarrelled with her. Maria demanded submission, and there was a cold dignity in her forgiveness, which made the proud heart rebel while bowing to it. There was a 'there then!' in her very kiss after a quarrel, which seemed like giving you back your right change after you had made a mistake; as if she said, 'Now we are straight, and mind better for the future!' They were each beauti-

ful creatures; but if you could have crammed them both into your heart, you would have placed Emma nearest the middle. Maria was showy, bold, and imposing; in company she would have carried off the laurels, for there was a look of innocence about what she did. But Emma! you would have liked Emma best when alone, for you could never know her amongst the many.

But we will do Godfrey Malvern justice. Although his heart still clung fondly to his wife, closer than it had long clung before that night, still he loved Maria for the noble part she bore in the blame; she sought not to shoulder all her sin upon Godfrey. "I loved you, and I have suffered for it," was ever upon her lips. That night Godfrey dreamed he was a Mahometan. He sat on his cushion, smoked his pipe, and drank his sherbet, with a wife on each side of him. Maria from time to time tempted him with wine against his creed, Emma offered him only coffee. He made his salaam to each in his sleep, drank with both, and touched his turban. He dreamed of paradise and the houris, and saw a lot of little Turks in the gardens, some dark-haired, and others light, and he awoke just as he fancied he heard a Mussulman from a neighbouring mosque calling the hour of prayer. He rose, for the morning had far advanced, and knelt down, with clasped hands and closed eyes, beside his bed; and He who forgave David, the king of Israel, turned not a deaf ear to the prayer of Godfrey Malvern.

CHAPTER XLVII.

IN WHICH WE OPEN A NEW SCENE. — DESCRIPTION OF THE PREROGATIVE COURT, WHERE WE FIND MORE THAN WE WENT IN QUEST OF.—ALSO A HASTY GLANCE AT THE STATE OF PARTIES IN THE BOROUGH OF BUTTERVOTE.

NEXT day Hopkins visited Clifford's-inn, and had a long conversation with the porter, but was unable to gather any tidings of Mr. Pashley— he might be dead, or he might be alive, the man knew nothing. Hopkins next went to the lawyer in Lincoln's-inn-fields, but he was out of town; the head clerk gone to his lunch, and all he saw there was a young man, practising his part for a glee, which was to be sung that night at a free-and-easy club. He then struck off in the direction of the

city, reached the top of Ludgate-hill, and taking the right-hand side of St. Paul's, turned down the arched gateway, and entered Doctors' Commons, where, after some little difficulty, he found the Prerogative Court. Having paid one shilling, Hopkins received a small slip of paper, which he was directed to take to another gentleman in a little closet at the far-end of the room, which paper the latter personage looked at, and having made a memorandum on another small slip of paper, he said, "You'll find the catalogues there, and by referring to the index discover the name of the person deceased, if the will is deposited here." Hopkins knew how absurd it would be for him to state that he was not certain whether the person, whose will he came in quest of, was dead or not; and if he was, he was ignorant of the time when he died, so he turned to the catalogues of the two preceding years, and commenced hunting among the P's in the index.

"What letter's that, sir, you are looking over?" said a little stout bustling red-faced man, whose face and body seemed to be all of a work with excitement. Hopkins told him it was P. "Mutton, Mutton's the name I want," answered the little restless man. "Great property, if I could but find the will—land, houses, money in the funds—fancy the will has been destroyed—would give fifty pounds to find the name. Mutton, Mutton, an hundred pounds to find Mutton!" and he went away to communicate the same information to an old gentleman at the next desk, who was an inveterate punster, and found much matter for merriment in the name.

A strange place is that Prerogative Court, a fine picture in miniature of the great world, where hope and despair stand sentinels at the door, and the living jostle the dead in their eager hurry to hunt into their graves. There is a smell of death about the place, as if grey old departed spirits lurked in the musty folios, and scattered their ashes amid the yellow and unearthly-looking parchments, which rise up in clouds of dust while you turn over the crackling and moth-eaten leaves, making you sneeze, while an hundred echoes take up the sound, and every tome seems to shake, and laugh and mock you, as if the grim old dead found it a rare spot to make merry in, to 'mop and mow' and play off a thousand devilish antics upon the living. That Court is the great Mart of merriment and misery, and its doors too often lead to madness. There you may see the Spendthrift come out leading Laughter by the arm, while his bashful and virtuous brother, accompanied by Poverty and Pity, walks weeping from the door. There the pale Widow bends lowly in her weeds, and sees sorrow

written in her name; while the painted Harlot turns over the same leaf, and bows her feathers to congratulate her disappointed rival, then turns away in triumph. There Old Age and Avarice come, bowed down beneath their load of gold, craving more ere the weight crushes them into the grave; while Youth and Beauty stoop before their time, and bear off another burthen of misery. The names of Death and Despair seem written on the very doors of that Court, which moan and groan when they are opened or shut, as if the spirits within wailed at the living who come there in quest of wealth, and leave them no peace. But Virtue, and Innocence, and Beauty, sometimes enter there, preceded by Poverty:—Pity, and Sorrow, and Piety, lead them by the hand; while Hope walks in the rear, her smile subdued, and her sweet countenance very solemn. These are angel visitants, and their hearts are with the dead—let them pass on. There is a sound of sighs in that Court, a smell of green and stagnant tears, in some of its corners, as if the living had wept themselves away in silence, and the dead had mantled over the pool of sorrow, and crusted its surface into dim and wrinkled parchment. If there is a moment of silence, and you listen, you may hear the dead walking among the Wills, like great moths, shod with pin-heads. They seem to talk to one another under their wings in an old Saxon language. Wickedness and Wrong have also their lurking-places there, where they lie and laugh at Right and Justice, while, concealed under a heavy pile of black-lettered laws, amid which you may hear Innocence and Poverty sob; but they can never escape from this Penitentiary of Pity; for the grim old judge who guards their gaol is deaf and blind, and sleeps the long year out on his musty and mouldering bed of parchment! Human hyenas come and feed about him, hungry and ravenous, but he hears not the shrieks and yells of the living whom they devour; and as for the dead, their bones may be crunched until the day of doom! the sound cannot awaken him. He sleeps, and leaves others to keep watch over the living. Drunkenness and Debauchery may stagger out arm-in-arm, and leave Goodness and Virtue behind to weep: that old judge can neither hear, see, nor feel; the dead only can interest him, and he is secure amid his sound sleep, well knowing that he only keeps watch over those who can 'awake no more!'

There you hear the living extolling the virtues, or magnifying the vices of the dead, just according to the sum bequeathed; while near relatives, in deep mourning, come to pore over the last Will and Testament, and their countenances brighten or darken, in keeping with the

state of the money-market. And the odd hand-writing—the strange signatures! There you see the bold, clear hand of the man, whose mind was made up long before he died; there is a look of decision about his autograph, such as stamps it as his Will and Deed—a bold document which no man would dare to doubt! Then comes the ill-written, almost illegible signature, as if the trembling hand of the writer had been guided in his last hours, showing with what tenacity he clung to life, and with what reluctance he gave up his worldly wealth; as if the man had been so busy, he could scarcely spare time to die, or had begged of Death to wait a moment or two, while he signed his name, before accompanying him on his dark and unpleasant journey. Such deeds make the heart ache while we gaze upon them, and prostrate poor humanity very low. Others come there (they say) not with any selfish motive, but merely to see if the dear-departed had remembered them at all, before he set out for another and a better world; but watch their eyes while they wander over the will, and you may soon detect the true motive. There you see the new lover hanging over his intended bride, but keeping a sharp eye on the document she is perusing, and ready to kneel down and worship her, or leave her to find her way home, as she best may, thus regulating his passion according to circumstances. If rich, he is ready;—if poor, he pairs off.

But it is within an inner-room, that the real character of the will-hunters can best be seen, where you find them perusing the original documents, fainting, sighing, smiling, or looking curses at the paper while they read. That is the spot to study the human countenance: if an artist would study expression, there he will find the lowering brow, the quivering lip, the dilated nostril, the drooping eye. Pity, Sorrow, Anger, Disappointment, Remorse, Hope, Fear, Hatred, Love, Joy, Envy, Agony, Shame, and more passions than philosophers ever numbered, or poets dreamed of.

There Beauty may sometimes be seen sitting in her dark drapery, while the tears fall one by one as she reads. You hear the long-drawn sigh as she recalls the familiar old household things, which have been her companions from childhood, but are now consigned to another, to whom she is a stranger. The chairs she had sat upon at many a merry meeting, the bed which stood in the old comfortable chamber, where she had been awakened many a time by the lark, when he 'startled the dull night' by his early song. Let us leave her to dream alone over what she can only now behold through the dim and melancholy windows of memory.

There sits an old lady, with an angry brow, and a scornful and contemptuous curl on her lip, as some name turns up at which she feels a dislike: some 'nasty madam, with her wheedling ways,' or, 'some artful fellow,' who was always sneaking and hanging about the old man,' and has outdone all the nearest relations. Or, perchance, it may be the 'artful hussey' herself, who, not quite easy as to the true position she stood in with the deceased, is anxious to have a peep beforehand, half-confident that she is in the possession of a handsome annuity, but finds herself named only as 'My servant Sally, to whom I bequeath the sum of five pounds, to buy mourning.' But even Sally consoles herself with the thought that Sathanas has long since got possession of the soul of the mean-spirited old hunks, and that is some comfort to her!

There also come the smoothers of pillows, and the makers of gruel, great gin-drinking, red-faced, old nurses, who sat up many a long night (sound asleep) in their large easy chairs, and drank strong tea, and ate up all the nice things which the dear old dying man could not touch; and great is their indignation to find that they are not mentioned at all, or that at most, there is but a sovereign left to buy either a new gown, or a mourning-ring. Such also consign the old gentleman to another well-known Old Gentleman in black. These crusty old ladies are generally placed a good way from the fire, lest their feelings should get the better of them, and tempt them to consign the will to the flames.

Hopkins also saw fine specimens of another class of will-hunters, those who have long been in search of a large estate, and thousands of pounds, back-rents, which have been accumulating for above a century, and which their father's father could never come in possession of, as no Will could ever yet be found. Such as these, invariably, smell of gin, tobacco, bread-and-cheese, and onions. They are also great eaters of cold boiled-beef and ham, and have generally very red noses. Nor are they ever alone: you find some old crony with them—a kind of Hope, with a good appetite, who would eat the very anchor she leans upon, if nothing better could be had. And such companions as these, are always promised four or five hundred a-year, when the stout red-nosed gentleman has recovered his 'just rights,' only because they help the other to drink, eat, and smoke, and puff out great clouds of Hope, and paint visions of what they will do when they have recovered the property. Hope has also named some child, in desperate speculation, after the red-nosed heir-at-law, and little Sam is to have a few hundreds a-year when he comes of age, and big Sam gets his estate, with all the

back-rents. Then this Hope, with his pipe, knows somebody, who is a lawyer's clerk, and who has spoken to a lawyer on the subject, who knows a great barrister, that is acquainted with an eminent counsellor, who has dined with one of the judges, that is acquainted with the Chancellor, and he (the lawyer's clerk) says the devil himself cannot hinder old Sam from 'coming into his just rights.' Hopkins noticed that these people were inclined to state the whole of their business to the gentlemen employed in the Will-office, how much it was a-year, and what they would do when they got it. He also observed that the same gentlemen 'hummed and ha'd,' and wrote away, although the other offered to treat them with whatever they liked—if they could but find the Will. But the catalogue was turned over in vain, until even Hope gave up the hunt in very despair; and red-nose searched until he was thirsty. So they went out to smoke again, to call lawyers rogues, and executors thieves, and the clerks in the Prerogative-Court, no better than they should be, and believing that, for above an hundred years, everybody, living or dead, were interested in keeping them out of 'their property.'

Hopkins continued his search until he was wearied, and all to no purpose; for, although he found more than one name which corresponded with that he sought for, when he referred to the will itself, he soon discovered that it bore no reference to the Mr. Pashley he was in search of. So he quitted this strange room, which lies like neutral ground between the living and the dead—this 'valley and shadow of death!' where unburied and breathing forms come to hold communion with the shades which for ever people it. Poor Hopkins! he felt very sorry that he had not yet discovered any trace of the rightful heir of Sutton-cum-Bottesford; for he fancied how uneasy the Squire would be until the true George Emmerson was found. "I will get Godfrey Malvern to draw up an advertisement, and insert it in the papers," was the conclusion Hopkins came to as he walked home. "Ingledew will never rest until the heir is found, and I will do my best to make him once more happy." Had Ingledew himself overheard this soliloquy he would have laughed outright, so great would his joy have been at the thought of having blinded a man like Hopkins, and that by 'assuming a virtue which he had not.'

There was a wide difference between these two characters. Hopkins was generally sincere in all he did, he seldom hid his hatred beneath a cloak; if he promised forgiveness he meant what he said. Within himself he was tolerably straight-forward; it was only when

another broke faith with him that he became suspicious; but even then he could easily be pacified. He contained within himself the elements of a good man, yet dangerous as gunpowder when his passions were once heated—a tool tempered to cut or bend, and very useful in the hands of a man like Ingledew. The Squire, on the other hand, was sincere in nothing he did, unless it appertained to his own selfish ends. If in a moment of unguarded kindness he made any concession which he could not well retreat from, the next hour found his brain busily employed in studying how he might best bend it to suit his own selfish purpose. Thus, when he yielded to the wishes of his daughter, and invited Godfrey Malvern to make the hall of Sutton-cum-Bottesford his future home, he had his own secret motives for so doing; for Godfrey had already distinguished himself in London by his writings, and it fed the Squire's vanity when he thought that his daughter had married somebody, now held in much higher estimation than the obscure village schoolmaster—the poor poet who published his first volume by subscription, and occasionally contributed to the Buttervote newspapers! Had Godfrey failed in his literary speculations, he might have died in some obscure garret in London, and been buried at the expense of the parish—it would never for a moment have disturbed the Squire's slumbers—he would have offered comfort to Emma, tried to squeeze out a tear of sympathy for her sorrow, while he contemplated another match for her, and hoped for 'better luck next time!' What use he might have turned Godfrey's 'false step' with Maria into, if he had been apprised of it, we will not hazard an opinion upon; the immorality of the matter would have given him no concern whatever, he would have made it subservient to some selfish purpose of his own.

But the case was very different: wherever he went, he heard the praises of his son-in-law; for in the borough of Buttervote, Godfrey Malvern was now held up as one of the greatest geniuses of the age. The two papers took their tone from such of the London papers as were most favourably disposed towards Godfrey's new novel, and quoted, and praised, and lauded him to the skies, taking care, however, to instil into the minds of their readers, that *they* (the editors) were the first to discover his great talent. The borough was in a complete ferment about Godfrey; and when the Squire gave it out, that his gifted son-in-law might shortly be expected to pay them a passing visit, it was resolved upon to give him a public dinner in the Town-hall; and more than one had commenced writing out the speeches which they intended

to deliver (extempore, of course!) on that memorable occasion. Indeed, five or six of Godfrey's most ardent admirers had gone so far as to subscribe sixpence each, intending to present him with a silver pencil-case, as a *slight* token of their sincere admiration of his genius. Miss Julia Wiggins had also obtained permission of a market-gardener to cut as much laurel as she liked out of the little shrubbery at the front of his cottage, to make a garland for Godfrey, when he came, similar to Apollo's, or Petrarch's, or the one she crowned Mr. Snubbs with, on his benefit-night, when he played Hamlet to a 'crowded-house,' which produced him one pound nineteen shillings and sixpence! Indeed, so great was Godfrey's popularity in Buttervote, that the two libraries were compelled to order, from London, one copy each of his new novel, so that the work was frequently asked for by five or six people a-day; and the librarians swore (upon honour), that although they had ordered (heaven only knows how many copies) yet, such was the demand for the work, it could not be obtained for either love or money. So Godfrey became exceedingly popular in Buttervote; not on account of the merits of his novel, but, solely, because it could not be obtained; and at last it became quite the fashion to ask for it. Those who did procure it, invariably kept the three volumes a week; thus, in both the libraries, the work found eight readers a-month in Buttervote only. The Blues actually clubbed together to keep the Pinks from reading it: the Pinks pursued the same course towards the Blues. It was like starting a new magazine; and afforded each party as much excitement as a little election. The librarians rubbed their hands with delight: each obtained ninepence a-day, for weeks, for a work which but few read, and which so many were anxious to possess. Bells were pulled, and knockers hammered at, wherever the party was known who held the coveted volumes. Doors were opened, and 'slammed' to again, lips curled, and bustles bristled out, as Pink or Blue, received their answers of, 'No, sir,' or, 'Not yet done with, madam.' Godfrey was, indeed, very popular! his name was a peg on which they hung up many an old grievance.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

SHEWS HOW GREGORY GRUFF FOUND OUT AN 'IN-KNEED' KIND OF REASONING, DISCOVERED A NEW WAY OF BALANCING ACCOUNTS, AND MET WITH AUDITORS, WHO WERE PUZZLED AT SEEING SUCH AN ORIGINAL ARITHMETIC;—ANOTHER QUEER CHAPTER.

We have before stated that Gregory Gruff took a deep interest in all that concerned Maria, and that it mattered not whatever the subject might be, he always looked at it, in his own peculiar light, and came to a different conclusion, to what other people did, respecting it; and this sprung from his odd notions about originality. He well knew that the evil Godfrey and Maria had committed was very great; but then, he argued to himself, that punishment would make the matter no better—that the misery each endured was, of itself, a terrible penalty, and that it would be carrying cruelty too far, to add one jot to what they already suffered. Maria was broken-hearted, and truly penitent for what she had done; and as to Godfrey Malvern, death would, indeed, have been a relief from the mental anguish which he day and night endured, for he had, more than once, meditated ending his wretchedness by suicide. "Of what avail would it be," argued Gregory to himself, "to publish their sins to the world—to expose them both to the gaze of the public?' Her, ninety men out of the hundred would look upon with mingled feelings of pity, and admiring passion! For him, the women would heave a sigh, and be sorry, and think not a bit the better of their 'brutes of husbands' at home. To Virtue it would bring no good, and Vice would see nothing in it, to shudder at. Kindness does more to shame sin than severity:—punishment too often hardens the heart which it is intended to soften. To hang a man, is to cut off his last chance of ever becoming better:—bread-and-water, and solitary confinement, bleach not a black-heart. Godfrey ought not again to live with Emma! but then," argued Gregory, "will she not (in spite of all his crimes), be more miserable without him, than with him, penitent as he already is? Would transporting him for life, add to her happiness? It might, if she liked some other man better than him:—that she will never do, bad as he is! Neither imprisonment, transportation, nor hanging, will do a shadow of good, in comparison with forgiveness and

reconciliation; and this must be brought about by Parson Preedom.—I will write to him.—Emma is a good wife.—Maria (excepting in one instance), an excellent woman.—Godfrey, a d—d rascal, because he is married; but for that, why—but it's an awkward affair—a bad job he is married—a ring and a license would have set all right, if it had not been for this! Such things are constantly occurring in the world; and after marriage (although people may talk), they are not thought the worse of for it. He has done Emma the greatest injury, after all; and that is unpardonable! Pity that Godfrey should have been born in a country, where the law tolerates a plurality of livings, and only one wife. Milton regretted this; and yet there are worse people in the world than the Turks—heathens although they be. Widows sometimes marry two or three months after the death of their husbands; some have three or four husbands—my wife for instance—yet she is not at all afraid of ghosts,—does not care twopence for Clarkson, Clayton, or Copley; all their names began with a C, excepting mine. One of her husbands was sent to the hulks: I have often wondered whether he is dead or not. I hope he isn't. And yet there are worse women than my wife in the world! God knows—the 'babby' might have been mine! such things have happened before now, and will again, although it's against the law; yet there are very many good laws, while others are very foolish. The laws of nature, and the laws of man, often vary very much, as do the planets—a revolution or an eclipse cannot always be depended upon, no more than the coming of a comet. A man cannot constantly depend upon himself. I have proved this—got drunk, when I resolved to keep sober, and married, when I intended to remain single. My nativity foretold not the coming of a pitch-plaster; there was scarcely a speck on Sol when it was cast. I must ascertain the hour in which Maria was born! Women are always backward to tell their ages; and this is a pity—you cannot depend upon their statistics. A woman who falls at thirty, wants nobody's pity; at twenty-five, knows what she is about; at twenty, ought to be forgiven; under that age, hang the man who refuses to marry her! Pass thirty, then only kick him; but her I would pardon, pity, and forgive; for love only could lead her into error, and love, at that age, ought to be considered as a matter beyond the power of law; or, at least, deserving of a distinction. Breaches of promise, and such like, ought then to become 'null and void,' saving in instances where the parties were found insane, or where some base, and selfish, and mean-interested and unmanly motive, can be produced. But leave love out then; he

wants no summoning. This would be difficult; for love is said to be always mad. But that I do not believe.

"Separate pity from love, and kind-heartedness from affection, and there is but little left worth preserving. Take love, and fear, and the world's opinion out of the balance, and see how the beam will then stand! Many a one would be seized upon for using light weights, who have the credit for being honest traders; for it is the same with business as love,—examine not too minutely, and you will be the more easily satisfied. But I will draw up a fair profit and loss account between Emma and Maria, and see how the balance stands."

Gregory then took out a sheet of paper, and placing the names of the two rivals at the head of each account in a debtor and creditor-like manner, summed up the matter as follows, balancing, however, each item as he went on:—

MARIA.

Dr.	*Cr.*
To Injury done to Emma.	By Doubled upon herself.
Chance of ever again being happy.	,, None.
Being restored to her position in society.	,, Not a shadow.
Claims by law on Godfrey.	,, No pretence.
Regaining her former peace of mind.	,, Hopelessness.
Youth, beauty, and intellect.	,, A falling tear.
Ending her misery.	,, The grave.

To Balance of Account, PITY, FORGIVENESS, AND DEATH.

EMMA.

Dr.	*Cr.*
To Injury done to Godfrey by leaving him.	By None.
,, Chance of ever again being happy.	,, A clear conscience.
,, Her position in Society.	,, Never lost.
,, Claims by law on Godfrey.	,, A virtuous wife's.
,, Regaining her peace of mind.	,, Hope.
,, Youth, beauty, and intellect.	,, Godfrey.
,, Ending her misery.	,, Time.

By Balance of Account, A REPENTANT HUSBAND.

This very original document was never intended to be brought to light during Gruff's life-time, nor are we at liberty to state how it came into our possession: but those who doubt its authenticity have our full consent to write to Parson Preedom, at Sutton-cum-Bottesford, for any further information they may require. There is also another account in existence, headed 'Godfrey Malvern;' but it is so purposely blotted that only very few words are legible: those that can be made out are 'prison,' but that is crossed—'shot,' this is also fairly

written over, and only 'D—n him!' stands unobliterated, in the bold round-hand writing of Gregory Gruff. But, even under this, there is a marginal retraction, a kind of moral, which stands out as a queer set-off, and is written in such little characters, that it requires the aid of a good glass to make the sentence out, and thus it reads, "Young wives should never leave young husbands, for long; it is d—d dangerous. G. G."

Gregory Gruff never was a clever accountant; this is well known to every clerk in the house where he banked: any error under a thousand pounds he could not bear to investigate. He looked at the sum total, and if that was greatly out, he swore, and called them all thieves at once. He disliked being troubled with petty larceny; a real broad robbery only could move him. It must be all bad, to ruffle the good heart of our friend Gregory.

Had Godfrey Malvern left Maria in her misery, Gruff would never again have spoken to him; he would have walked over him in the street, without deigning to notice him; but when he saw the struggles Godfrey had made to support her,—had satisfied himself that he had added to days of misery nights of mental labour, without either complaining, or seeking for help! Gregory could not find in his heart to write him down a villain. "He says he has sinned, and suffered for it," said Gregory to himself; "and the many pages he has written, under these pangs, show his sincerity. If Emma forgives him, the World ought. D—n the world! he has not troubled it for a farthing; and I will be a true friend to Maria after all."

Gregory Gruff kept his word; not a day elapsed without his calling upon her—he was more kind to her than any father would have been—he was her 'ministering angel!' And the landlady with whom Maria lodged, almost loved Gregory Gruff. But kindness could not now cheer the low spirits which preyed upon Maria. She was, indeed, very grateful, very thankful—and expressed her feelings not in words, but in tears. She was, indeed, very penitent; the man or woman who now beheld her, and could have reproached her for her sin, would have been human brutes! Gruff would have struck them down, and trampled upon them with no more remorse than he felt at grinding the dirt under his heavy feet—any real man would have done the same. A weeping angel seemed to walk behind her wherever she went—with wings folded, and hands pressed upon the mouth, as if to stifle every sob. Many a time, when Gruff walked out with Maria, he took her thin delicate white hand within his own, and pressed it with a gentle

pressure when he saw the tears gathering in her eyes, and said, "Never mind, I am your fond old father now, and I love you!" No child ever loved its parent with more affection than Maria did our good friend Gregory. So they wandered out together in the outskirts of the Borough whenever the weather permitted, and Godfrey was too much occupied to accompany them. But Gregory was not Godfrey, with all his kindness; and this simple truth gave Maria many a heart-ache!

Nor were the scenes the same; for Maria, in her earlier years, had been nursed in the purer air of the West-end of London, amid squares and carriages, parks and splendid streets, shops with plate-glass fronts, in the windows of which were exhibited the costliest of silks and velvets, shawls from Cashmere, and fashions from Paris, which formed a strange contrast to those in the Old Kent or Walworth Road. There was little that savoured of the aristocratical in the neighbourhood which she now traversed, where night-caps were ticketed at sixpence-halfpenny each, gloves at ninepence per pair, bonnets, ready to put on, at four-and-sixpence, and showy-looking shoes, at two-and-threepence; — where dresses were marked sevenpence-halfpenny a-yard, and warranted to wash into the bargain;—where every three or four shops sold tobacco and stationery,—grocers dealt in halfpenny bundles of wood, and fashionable dress-makers took in plain sewing, and got-up linen neatly;—where the dirty beer-boy jostled the man who sold baked potatoes, and the lady on the first floor went out to buy her own mutton-chops, while the gentleman who occupied the front parlour might be seen at the back-door every morning, polishing his own boots. Very different were these scenes, to what our dark-haired beauty had been accustomed to, when some friend's carriage called in a morning to take her up a-shopping, or, in the afternoon, carried her, with a luxurious roll, through the Parks; while night brought theatres and *soirées*, songs and music, and all the dear little tittle-tattle, which is the very soul of existence among those who have more money than they can spend, and more time than they know how to consume. But Maria had long yawned over these pleasures, before she met with Godfrey Malvern: like our first mother, in the garden of Paradise, she became wearied of the roses without thorns, the birds that sang all day long and never quarrelled, the lions that played with the lambs, and all the still quietude which threw such a dreamy monotony over the garden. She wanted a change: and she soon found one; and, when it was too late, she turned her head, and beheld the angry angel brandishing the flaming sword above the

gates of that Eden, which she now sighed for in vain. Many a one, like Maria, has coveted the forbidden fruit, plucked it, and found the taste bitter as ashes.

It so chanced, that, the day following the one on which Godfrey received the letter from his wife, Gregory Gruff and Maria extended their walk to within a short distance of Blackfriars-bridge. The morning which broke upon the dreary night, which we have attempted to describe, was one of those mornings,—

'Which laugh the clouds away, with playful scorn;'

and was, indeed, so fine, that it had tempted Mrs. Gruff to walk abroad, accompanied by Mary and the 'babby.' 'They met!—'twas in a crowd;' Gruff, with Maria on his arm, and his 'dear wife,' with Mary and the child close at her heels; for both parties had been compelled to wait while a long train of vehicles passed down an adjacent street. They met in the centre of a crossing.

"Gracious goodness, missus!" exclaimed Mary; "master 's got another lady! Do but look at her! Shan't we soon have another 'babby?' Won't it be a pretty one, this time, if it takes after the mother? Oh my!—what a man he is!"

Mrs. Gruff stood speechless with astonishment!—Gregory, with consternation! She would have fainted, had not a great deal of rain fallen in the early part of the morning, and left the roads in such a state as threatened to spoil her dress; so she contented herself with exclaiming, "Oh, you old villain! had I not happened to meet you, you would have found another child in an omnibus! Mary, Mary! support me!—this is the third time he 's broken my heart, and ruined my peace of mind!"

Gruff wished, at that moment, the devil had him. Maria turned cold as death; while Mary, with the 'babby' in one arm, and her mistress leaning on the other, kept up a regular fire, to which the child struck up an accompaniment; and thus it ran, with the variations:—"Oh, master! how can you be so cruel?—Hush! hush!—daddy 's a bad man!—Don't take it so to heart, missus!—You proud, stuck-up, good-for-nothing madam, you!—I'm your betters, in spite of your fine fal-the-rals!—I would tear your hair off, by handfuls, if I were his wife! Poor, dear, patient lamb!—he's a nasty good-for-nothing fellow!—Hush! hush! babby! Mary, take care of him! Oh, master! how ever can you?"

Just then, Mrs. Gruff fainted in downright earnest, for the first time for many years; and had not the man, who swept the crossing, dropped

his stump of a besom, and caught her in his arms, she would have fallen, and spoilt her silk dress. And all this was occasioned by the sudden appearance of a shabby-genteel good-looking sort-of-man, who, with a blue bag in his hand, happened to come up at that very moment. She kicked the mud up with both feet, looked at the stranger, then fell back into the arms of the crossing-sweeper, and exclaimed, "It is!" as she sank upon his bosom, imbedding the fur and velvet of her shawl, with the grease of his sleeved-waistcoat. "Have you never a copper, your honour, to bestow on the poor sweeper?" were the last words Gruff heard, as he handed Maria into a cab, nd left the sweeper to hold out his hat, and support Mrs. Gruff, without showing the least symptom of distress. The man with the blue-bag stood staring at Mrs. Gruff in silent astonishment; and when he did speak, he said, "My wife!—By G—! I was in hopes the devil had got her before this!"

CHAPTER XLIX.

IN WHICH WE PURPOSELY PLUNGE 'STILL DEEPER INTO THE MIRE,' AND FETCH UP SIN OF THE DARKEST MOULD.—A CHAPTER SOLEMN AS A FUNERAL SERMON, AND 'TRUE AS THE GOSPEL'— WRITTEN EITHER TO BE READ OR LEFT ALONE; AND ONE WHICH WILL MAKE THE READER 'A SADDER AND A WISER MAN.'

THERE is a charm about childhood, which springs from its very innocence; and we feel happy while we think how ignorant it is of the evil which has taken such deep root, grown, and flourished, and thrown its broad branches so wide and far into the world. Then a shadow moves over, and settles upon the beauty of the picture, when we contemplate the coming years, the sin and misery, which, although never brought into close companionship, must be passed on the way, as we journey through life; for they are the Human Mile-stones, which a good driver may, perchance, never stumble upon, though they mark every stage he passes, and hang out, like signs, at every hostel he halts at.

There is also a charm about the Childhood of Authorship, a beauty and an innocence, that send a sunshine amongst the thoughts of a young poet, while he contemplates the calm and loveliness of nature, for he hears only the humming of bees, the singing of birds, the murmuring of pleasant waters, and the gentle rustling of long green leaves;

sees but the sleeping-blue of heaven, and the picture-like tranquillity of the earth; where every figure in his landscape is an image of love—a dove, a lamb, or a girl dreaming in some secluded shade—no sin to sully the scene, no Truth to startle the charm. Life! real life, comes after, laden with all the bitter knowledge of truth, and peoples the landscape with other beings; faces peep out from among the leaves, and from beneath the flowers, and other voices ring out and awaken the dreamer from his delicious reverie, while he rubs his eyes, and stares to see the Truth. This crystal world is magnified, and the clear round drop expands before him—now no longer pure; but filled with living forms, which chase, and tear, and rend, and devour each other! and this he sees is neither poetry nor fiction, but hideous life! The angel-forms that streak and sail through the mirror seem ever to be gliding away, lest the black, the wriggling, and the wide-mouthed, devil-headed monsters, should coil round and devour them. Start not, while we draw up the curtain,—or give but one shudder! then silently sit out the scene.

Who, that has ever seen Etty's splendid picture of Ulysses and the Syrens, can forget its awful beauty, or fail to see the fine moral which it presents? The foreground of that island of graves, is not seen by Ulysses: his eye dwells only upon the beautiful figures which are trying to allure him to that fatal shore:—the very din of the breakers, which wash over the dead, is not heard above the sounds of the music they awaken. That moral, Homer drew three thousand years ago; and Etty placed it again before our eyes, that we might see more clearly the wisdom of the God of Poets. Ours is a different picture: the Syrens hideous, and the shore strewn with bleached skeletons, and grim skulls, that stretch and whiten below the ribbed rocks, which beetle above this hateful and forbidden coast.

To a house which stands '*on the way to Hell, going down to the chambers of death*,'* situated at the corner of a dark, narrow, and dirty street in the Borough, we must now conduct our readers. The door was open, as it ever was after dark, and a long thin rushlight burned in a glass-lamp, which was hung in the centre of the passage, while a black, dirty staircase, went winding, and yawning up, into the darkness; for the light only just illuminated the filthy entrance at the foot of it, and cast a dim halo upon a large, old, torn, and dirty mat, caked hard as a board, and never shaken. But let a foot pass that ragged mat ever so lightly, and, like a spider startled by the shaking of the remotest line of its web, against which some passing fly might have struck, so

* Proverbs, vii. 27.

would dart out, from an opposite door, an old hag with a candle in her hand, and a dirty cap on her head, from under which streamed her hard iron hair, while the light flashed full upon her blotched and bloated features, as she stood up the presiding goddess of this grim and hideous hell.

It is yet early in the evening,—the end of November, and a candle is burning in the back-room up-stairs; a girl, who once might have looked handsome, is holding a small piece of a broken looking-glass in one hand, while with the other she is busied in painting her cheeks; a false front lies ready to be put on, as it rests on a ricketty and dirty-looking table; one end of the long train of curls has fallen into a glass, and floats on a surface of the very vilest gin. Another young woman, her companion, is drying her stockings before the fire; they will have been washed, dried, and worn within the hour. The collar, which is thrown over the chair-back, has undergone a similar process; she *ironed* it between her hands. Another woman now enters the room; she has fetched a gaudy-looking cotton gown out of pawn; the girl, painting, could not go out for want of it. Her companion lent her the two shillings to redeem it. An old velvet bonnet, with a feather in it, is placed on the bed; a shawl lies folded up beside it—it was stolen out of a passage, two nights before—the border has been narrowed to disguise it. The bed is without any curtaining; the pillow-cases dirty as old dusters; the screws are either broken or lost, and the posts held up by strong bed-cord. A bottle of gin stands on the mantel-piece—the smell of it would make your heart heave; another bottle stands empty beside it which three hours ago, was filled with gin and turpentine. The walls are covered with coloured prints; some in little black frames—others pasted on the wall,—tinselled, and gaudy-looking enough; they are theatrical portraits of well-known actresses, in well-known characters—Diana, and so on; the colouring, however, more bold than chaste. Here there lies an odd volume of a novel,—there, a song-book without covers, beside a hair-brush, nearly worn out, a pot of bears' grease, with hair-pins in it, a broken comb, and part of a pack of cards. The cards they keep to tell their luck by, before they go out. They shuffle and cut them for hours; and as they turn up, black or red, believe that they shall meet with a dark, or a fair man, '*in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night.*'* Their under-clothes are ragged and dirty; but, poor wretches, they have no change! and we

* Proverbs, vii. 9.

paint on their cheeks, the false curls, the gaudy-looking gowns, flounced and furbelowed, yet scarcely able to hang together, will, with the shawls, the bonnets, and the feathers, when all put on, with a pin here, and a stitch there, pass muster beneath the gas-lights at the fronts of theatres, and gin-shops, until another day, when they will again undergo new repairs, should they not be 'unfortunate,' and have to send them again to pawn. And she, who has just done painting herself, breaks forth into a song:—it is 'Alice Grey.' Her voice is still good; but she stops short in the first verse to swear; for she has discovered that the sole is coming off her boot, and that it has burst on one side. She had those boots new but the week before. Her 'friend' bought them for her.

The young woman who fetched the gown from the pawnbroker's, has taken the halfpence from the mantelpiece, and gone out to buy something for tea. She returns with the produce in her apron. One quarter of an ounce of tea, a penny, two ounces of sugar, a penny, two ditto of butter, a penny—very salt, the scrapings of the tub; a twopenny loaf, and a halfpenny candle, all rolled together. She was to have brought some soap, but had not money enough. They had been washing without soap—rubbing the dirt in, not out. The gin they put in their tea, for they have no milk, nor money to buy any, and no one gives trust in that neighbourhood. There is an old muff on the bed's-head, and a broken parasol thrust through it; the pawnbroker will not lend a farthing on them. Empty bottles which once contained eau-de-cologne, enamelled pots which had held tooth-powder, worn-out brushes, &c., together with an iron, stand on a shelf over the door, besides a plate, which contains a small thin hard rasher of bacon. There is also an egg on the plate, and a dead chicken in the egg; these will be cooked on the morrow should they run short. The young woman who runs the errands, and has made tea, does not go out herself on an evening, but sits up for her companions, very often without a light, when they are short of candle. Sometimes she lies down on the bed for an hour or two, sometimes takes up the song-book while they are out; but if late, mostly draws a chair before the fire, and throws on a small portion of coal, or a few cinders, just to keep the fire in until her friends come home, which may be about daylight, or if it rains, soon after midnight. She knows when they are coming by their cough. Sometimes they get into the station-house, then she has to hunt up their friends, get them out, and fetch more gin, and listen to

all that befel them. Her name is Jane, the names of her companions Arabella and Sophia.

Jane is very low-spirited; she cannot enjoy her tea, although it is half gin and turpentine; and Sophia, after having cursed her stockings for being so long a-drying, looked in the bit of glass, and enquired if she does not appear 'killing,' begins to rally the poor dependent for her want of spirits, by saying, "Cheer up, Mother Miserable! A short life and a merry one, I say. What the devil's the odds, when they measure us for a last suit! As Dark Dick used to say, they who deal, are sure of a trump, if not of an honour. Have some more gin in your tea, Ginny. Never mind the 'babby,' my wench; you know it's better done for than if you had it. Poor old fellow! I little thought he had it when I cleared him out. I wish we had the money and the watch to melt over again; but it did us no good. And yet he's a dear old fellow, is that old Gruff. Lord! how everybody gammoned him!" And she almost choked herself with laughter, while recalling the scene with which our readers are already well acquainted.

"It isn't the child I have any fear of now," replied the poor low-spirited dependent, Ginny. "But Bill, when he comes to find out that I hav'n't drowned it,* will murder me! I know he will. For he made me go down on my knees, and take a solemn oath that I would drown it. I have told his mother-in-law every thing, and she says I needn't fear him; but I do, and I can't help it. I'm so afraid he should come when you are both out! I know he would kill me if he did come!—I have had such awful dreams of a-night. But I don't care, I can but die, and they're sure to hang him!"

"What stuff you talk! Ginny," said Arabella, rubbing a row of glass beads, which she was about to fasten round her neck. "He'll none kill you, he's too fond of his own neck for that—he'll be glad enough to hear that the child is taken so good care of. I know Bill better than you do. He may bounce, and swear, and swagger; but he's a great coward! I once threw a glass at his head in my passion, and he ran off as much frightened as if I'd poked a pistol in his face. Stick to him, my lass! and you'll soon have the best of it. Lord! I was never frightened of a man. When I lived with old Captain Dunn, he brought his pistols out to me a dozen times when I had been staying

* Vide police-reports at Greenwich, a few months ago, where a man was brought up for ill-using his wife, she having concealed the child which she had promised to throw into the Thames, her husband having threatened her life unless she destroyed it.

out late; but he never could remember where to find the powder and bullets; and I used to get his snuff-box, charge, and threaten to shoot him!—give him a pinch, make him sneeze, and laugh at him, and then make it up. Oh! the tricks I played the old fellow!" and she laughed again at the thoughts, and they all laughed in chorus, though Ginny sighed when she had ceased laughing.

"But that's nothing to what I did," said Soph—they called her Soph for short, she was 'merry as a worm in a coffin'—and she began to narrate a few of her adventures, which we will not inflict upon the reader; for no one knows better than ourselves, that we are treading upon forbidden ground. The paths of truth are not all pleasant ones! and though we tread them with a firm foot, and a bold heart, it being our duty to depict life such as it really is, yet we like not the task, while gathering knowledge from evil. It is a painful pleasure.

After a time Sophia and Arabella went out—'*in the streets to lay in wait at every corner;*'*—to add to the great chain of iniquity, which stretches its links through every avenue of London,—to increase the number of those poor young creatures whose faces you never see for many years together, whose hollow coughs, sunken eyes, painted cheeks, and fevered lips, death soon gathers into his great garner:—there they are at rest, the cold and rainy night; the fever and the shiver, buried for a time under poisonous potations, are no more felt! Reader, if thou art a man! speak kindly to them whenever they accost thee. Many of them might have ornamented some happy home! have been fond mothers, and faithful wives; but they fell, and there was no hand to raise them. A kind word, or a kind action, may call the penitent tear to their cheeks—may strike some slumbering chord, which, though out of tune, has still sweet music in it—may drive the memory back to happier days, and to reflections which in the end may lead them, though fallen, into some other Eden! where the flaming sword is quenched by the tears of the angel who keeps watch at the gates.

Maria might by chance have become one of these, the beautiful, the highly-gifted, the erring Maria; for doubtless there are many amongst them whose early career resembled hers. But Heaven pardoneth the truly penitent! and many a name, we doubt not, will be found written in letters of light in the great Ledger of Life, while their demure and saintly-looking seducers will quail as the darker volume is unclasped, in which conscience chronicles her accounts! Justice may

* Prov. vii. 12.

slumber at times, but still there are ever a thousand eager eyes keeping a sharp watch about her throne; and when she awakens, and weighs our deeds in the balance, not a grain of either good or evil will be found wanting. That golden beam Truth only can turn!

Arabella and Sophia went out together, and left poor Jane alone in that dreary apartment, her heart still yearning for her child, although she had long since discovered that it was in the safe keeping of good old Gruff. The girl trembled at every footstep which trod that dark ruinous staircase—for she dreaded the approach of the brutal Bill while she was alone. But footsteps came and went, as the silence of the house was broken at intervals by the rough voices of men, and the softer accents of women, while lights glanced for a few moments between the crevices; then all again became dark! but Jane still sat by the little handful of fire, her elbows resting on her knees, while the damnable trade drove on. Neither the cry for help, nor the call of robbery, seemed to affect her; Policemen came and went, when they were called in to quell some tumult, as watches were lost, and purses missing:—the neighbouring station-house filled! There was swearing in the dark street, and struggling on the gloomy staircase — glasses jingled, and laughter sounded, amid which rose the voice of the she-Cerberus below; but the sounds seemed not to affect poor Jane, for they had long been familiar to her, a philosopher might have sat in that little room, and contemplated the cracking and grinding, and rending of the stormy world without, and drawn from his reveries such morals as would have 'made the angels weep!'

Death and the law seemed to stand centinels beside that ever-open door! the one bowing his bold bony scalp to the powdered skull of the other; and chuckling, with inward delight, while they looked on, and saw, how fast the prison and the grave were filling with their victims! Despair had taken to drink, and was the merriest of the mad who shouted through the darkness of that forbidding neighbourhood. Grief had steeped her sorrows in gin, and danced before the door as if she had never carried a sad heart. Wan Consumption brightened the colour on her cheeks by potations of strong brandy, while Robbery grew bold on raw rum; and the petty thief forgot all thoughts of transportation as he tossed off his glass at the bar of the adjoining tavern. The whole dark line of that desolate-looking street, which seemed to have shut itself up and gone to sleep in the day-time, had burst into full and hideous life when the midnight settled down upon it. The Tavern-keeper chinked his silver, and the Cigar-seller his pence; while the

Pieman at the gloomy corner called out, 'All hot!' and sent up the steam from his tin can in triumph! Doors were thrown open, and lights met each other midway, until the whole atmosphere gleamed like the dim and far-off-seen portals of hell! Evil passions blazed out, yet no one there seemed to regard the terrible light, though human figures kept crossing each other as they passed and repassed before the flames, like dumb devils moving away, each on his separate and evil mission—still Jane sat alone!

Had a gallows stood at one end of that street, and a gibbet at the other—the one, with its victim still writhing and warm, and blackening in the face; the other, with its hideous skeleton, grinning, and showing its bleached bones through the rusted irons—the warning would not have checked the dark current of sin which nightly rolled through it. For here children had grown up whose parents had long since been hung, transported, or imprisoned; and they again had become men and women, and were succeeded by another race, who would fill the same places and run the same course as they were running, or had already run.

Blacks are liberated and slaves set free in other countries, thousands of pounds are sent away to better the condition of strangers living on far-distant shores, but not a shilling is expended to mend the morals, or better the condition of those poor wretches, who live crowded together in the close streets and contagious courts, which send up their festering vapours to mingle with the smoke of our own comfortable, and charitable homes. No; they are known to be thieves, pointed out as robbers, a record kept of the number of their imprisonments! they are 'caged' for a time, and then again turned loose upon the community. A few more chances to plunder are allowed them!—then come the Hulks, or transportation for life, where they labour on until they die, cursing the Mother Country in which they first drew the breath of life!

Men of many meetings, saints only in speech, drawers of tears, and raisers of white-handkerchiefs! leave off all humbug, and begin to work in downright earnest! We point to the misery, and slavery, and ignorance, and crime, which is taking deeper root daily around our very doors, then turn to you with a feeling of manly disgust! May you be d—d, if you do no better than you have done! May the gold ye swindle the foolish and kind-hearted out of, be poured red-hot and molten down your cursed throats! Ye are like dark deities who shake the pale fair stars of our island with your false

thunder! Ye have hired servants, grim liars! who forge, and make your *black* bolts! and blinding the eyes of your auditors, with stolen lightning, you sit like great thunderers at your ease—now bellowing with all your might, then dazzling with some artful and arrowy flash! until those who know no better believe ye to be very gods!—while such as are behind the scenes, look on, laugh, and get fat, and enjoy the fun! Human life (at least the poorer portion of it), seems now to struggle only to keep itself out of the poor-house, until it finds its way into the grave! Poverty, in millions of instances, is borne without a murmur, and labour holds up its head until it falls into the welcome arms of death! And this is in the most charitably-disposed country in the whole wide world! How is this? Because the stream which bursts pure, as the light of heaven when it first gushes forth, is perverted, and turned into dark, corrupt, and selfish channels. The givers are angels, the receivers too often devils! Enemies to their country, the very leeches that draw out its richest and best blood! Reader! we crave thy pardon; but Truth is ever dropping her lines of light athwart our story, and pointing with contempt to what we portray without her guidance!

At length a voice was heard in the passage below, which drove back the blood into Jane's heart. There was no mistaking that voice, as it greeted the old hag in the parlour, and said, 'Well, old mother Damnable! is Gin and Bitters in the way?"

"Yes, she is," replied the old hag; "she's always in the way; I wish you would take her out of it."

"The devil you do!" muttered Bill between his teeth, as he threaded his way up-stairs; and slamming open the door with all his might, he said, "So you've left my old mother-in-law, have you, madam? Put your bonnet on, and come along with me!—where's the kid? If there's any money about the place, bring it with you," added he, as the trembling girl put on her bonnet.

"I am coming—there is no money—the child is gone!" replied Jane; "It is well taken care of. I couldn't do what you wanted me to do with it. I would sooner have drowned myself."

"Nobody would have missed you, if you had!" answered the brute; "I know I shall be hung for you. You swore you would destroy it: you have broken your oath. You would betray me if you had the chance; but I'll be beforehand with you, when I get you home. You know what I swore I would do. I'll keep my promise. Come along."

He put out his arm, caught hold of her, and with one savage swing hurled her with such force against the door, that her head came in contact with the post, as she fell upon the floor. With many an oath he then bade her get up, that he might break her neck down-stairs; and though the poor girl was crying bitterly, she gave him back no abuse, but only said, "Do not be angry with me, William, and I will do whatever you wish me, and go wherever you please to take me." But her forbearance seemed only to harden the brute; and when she arose, he again struck her down with his clenched fist. He was in the act of kicking her, when the door was pushed open, and the two girls who occupied the apartment, entered it.

At one glance Arabella saw what had happened; and with eyes flashing like a fury, she rushed to the fire-place, seized the poker, and struck such a blow on the upraised arm of the villain, as caused it to drop, stunned and motionless, by his side. Sophia had taken up the long broom; and in swinging it back, to give greater force to the blow, although she broke the window, yet the head came with such weight against his cheek, that with one stride he sprang out of the room, missed his footing on the stairs, and went headlong into the passage below, carrying away the lamp by his fall. Here he was met by Dark Dick, who finished the work which the others had so well begun, and so belaboured the brutal and unmanly coward, that he called out for mercy, louder than a school-boy who is writhing under his first castigation.—A kick and a push, and he was hurled into the middle of the dark street, and there left to 'pick himself up' as he best could. The door was then closed with a loud bang, and Dick walked up-stairs.

Women, when their passions are once thoroughly roused, are worse than men; as it is with their love, so it is with their hatred: there is more earnestness about it. A fight between two women is a dreadful sight: they would kill one another if they could. There is none of that bold standing up, that giving and taking of blows at a measured and deliberate distance: they close at once 'hammer and tongs,' caps and bonnets, 'tooth and nail'—all are at work: they fight like tigresses. Dick was almost afraid to look on the two painted furies which stood before him, when he entered the room. They seemed taller than women, their eyes flashed, and their lips were compressed, while their bosoms heaved like hills under which some earthquake is at work, the pent-up fire not yet exploded. They would have torn Dick to atoms, if he had spoken an angry word; but when they saw him stoop down, and pick up the poor senseless girl from the floor, and lay her on the bed,—as if touched

by the wand of some powerful magician, so did their feelings change; and the tears gushed in an instant into Arabella's eyes, as she kissed Dick, and said, "God bless you! You were always a man, Dick; and whatever she might be, would never see a woman put upon."

"No, d—n me, if I would!" answered Dick; "bad as I have been, I had once a kind old mother; and I shall never forget her. But I have served the brute out!"

There was an expression in the face of Arabella, as she looked at Dick, while he uttered this sentence, which showed that the true feelings of the woman were still there. Such a look had never settled upon that countenance for years—so true, so earnest, so full of silent admiration! A stranger, who had never known what that woman was, would have loved her for only that look: it was the countenance of Arabella in the days of her innocence,—somewhat older and more care-worn, but the same expression was there. She spoke not; but seizing the hand of Dick, pressed it to her bosom: and seating herself on the wretched bed, sobbed as if her heart would break. She uttered but one sentence, as her grief subsided, and said, "I had a dear mother once, Dick; but she is also dead! I have, many a-time, knelt at her feet, and said my prayers."

Meantime Sophia attended upon Jane; and having succeeded in getting her to swallow a little poisonous gin, the poor girl began to recover: she then accompanied her to her own bed, and left Dick and Arabella together. The right chord had been struck that night; neither the heart of that man nor woman, were any longer what they once had been. '*There was joy in heaven.*' The daylight broke upon them, and seemed to fall all the brighter on the tears which fell down their penitent cheeks. The paint and the false curls were consigned to the flames; and Arabella began to prepare breakfast with a paler cheek, but a softer eye, than had, for many a-day, beamed upon a man, as it then did on Dark Dick.

CHAPTER L.

LAW, LOVE, AND REMORSE—IN WHICH WE INTRODUCE TWO NEW CHARACTERS—RECALL A FEW OLD, FAMILIAR SINS—THEN LEAVE GODFREY MALVERN WITH HIS WIFE.

Squire Ingledew, M.P. for the borough of Buttervote, had again returned to London, and brought with him his beautiful daughter and her child, together with Cinderella, Parson Preedorn, and his niece. Thus were all the characters of any importance in our story at once in London; and there was more than one clear-headed man amongst the number. But our scene now changes to an apartment in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, and that the residence of an eminent lawyer: the very place where Hopkins called in a former chapter. The lawyer was a tall, thin man, with a long, studious face, and a pair of sharp, deep-set grey eyes—which seemed to look you through whenever they drew up the cunning wrinkles of the cheeks, and brought down the grey, bushy, overhanging brows to their true searching focus—they caused you to look down, or made you turn away your head—so sharp, searching, ferretting, and fiery, were those little buttoned-up eyes. You saw at once that he was a true man of business, and that you might as well try to cheat the devil as to deceive him. He loved the law from his very soul;—there was no man in London who could see more clearly into a dark and difficult case than he could. He might have risen to the height of Lord Chancellor, if he had been ambitious; but he was wealthy, and contented himself with the simple and honourable title of Solicitor; though many an eminent barrister, counsellor, and even judge, looked up to him to solve any knotty point in the law. A more clear-headed man never graced the proud profession, in which he only registered himself as one of its humblest members. Such was Richard Cook, Gentleman;—a title he never disgraced, but valued more than the common and unmeaning 'esquire' which is appended to the name of almost every poor devil who has published a volume, though the said 'esquire' hath not the wherewith at times to *pay* the two-pence on the *unpaid* letter, which the shabby correspondent hath affixed so empty-sounding, and unmeaning a title upon. Around the room were arranged an endless pile of scarce and valuable law-books, many of which had stood undisturbed for

years—the worthy lawyer having transferred to within the small compass of his own retentive memory all that he cared to retain—and they now stood in a quiet seclusion of dust, with the occasional curtaining of a spider's web; as if to tell that the treasury of thought and learning had long since been plundered. A law-bookseller would have rubbed his hands with delight, if he had been called in to value that library; for on every foot of shelving was piled the worth of many good guineas. There stood great names, in rare old editions:—Glanville, Lyttleton, Coke, Burns, Jenkins, Keilway, Benloe, Brooke, Dalison, Bellewe, Ashe, Cary, and Dyer; together with Leonard, Moore, Owen, and an hundred others, who have handed down the crude laws of the Plantagenets, the Tudors, and the Stuarts,—rows of mighty names, whose echoes ring through our own age, and whose struggles in the cause of justice have made the law-courts of England what they are.

The talented gentleman sat with one leg thrown across the other, alternately musing and making a note here and there, as he kept unravelling a most entangled web—such a one, indeed, as few men saving himself would have undertaken at any price: but now he only seemed to enjoy the difficult; for the plain, clear law had long been to him a mere plaything. What occupied others months, he saw through and decided upon in a moment. He knew the secret of the spring—touched it—and threw the case aside. then busied himself in some new discovery. He hated a clear cause, and generally handed it over to some one less skilful than himself. A good ard, blind, dark, old law-suit, which had puzzled the longest heads for years, was what he delighted in: to his palate, it was like the smacking of racy old Port. He was busied then with a case, which had been contested in different courts for nearly half a century: possessors and claimants had followed each other—died—and been buried; and the next of kin, on both sides, were still as eager for law as ever their forefathers had been Thousands of pounds had been spent, and still matters stood as they had ever done; and he had just stepped forth in time, before the estate was thrown into Chancery. The dust, and darkness, and litigations of half a century cleared off from every line he read: he had found the long-hidden end of the ravelled skein, and he drew it out before him beautifully. The knots which so many skilful hands had tied, gave way at his very look; and he more than once chuckled inwardly to himself, as he unkennelled some 'cunning fox,' who, by a mere trick, had baffled the best-tried hounds and the keenest hunters.

"Mr. Austin, sir," said the clerk, entering his private room.

"Shew him in," answered the lawyer, the chain of his thought unbroken. Mr. Austin entered the room, and was motioned into a chair, where he sat for half an hour, without a single word being spoken. Austin was the captain of a steam-packet: he was a fine specimen of a rough, honest, hard-handed, but kind-hearted, old sailor;—broad across the chest, as his own cabin-door, and with a countenance which had been bronzed in the hot sun of many a climate. Though he had earned sufficient to live upon, he loved to feel the dash of the salt spray upon his wind-and-weather-beaten cheeks, so took to a steamer, as he said, 'just for amusement and a bit of a change, as it was like living at home, and only going out now and then for a trip, with a pleasant company.' He was captain of the unfortunate packet on which the explosion took place, alluded to in the first chapter of our story. Since that melancholy affair, he had bought a share in a larger vessel, which voyaged from Hull to London;—'all sea,' as he said, 'but the Thames.'

"Well, captain," said the lawyer, at length arising from his seat, and shaking the honest sailor as heartily by the hand as if he had only just at that instant entered the room, instead of having sat there a whole long, silent half hour; "and how are you, my friend? You have encountered a few storms since I last saw you. No more explosions, I hope."

"Rather a rough voyage this bout, sir," answered the captain, turning the quid in his cheek, and spitting into the fire, with a crack which struck the hot bars like a pistol-shot; "dirty weather aloft, a good deal of the way; but we rode right through it without any damage being done, except to one of the paddle-boxes, which an ugly sea struck in Boston Deeps."

"I am very glad to hear you got off so well," replied the honest lawyer, as he still retained the big, brown, sun-burnt, fist of the sailor within his own snow-white hand, for such it looked, enfolding the broad paw it pressed;—pale learning, and swarthy labour entwined: two more honest hands never grasped one another. "Well," continued the lawyer, as he reached the worthy sailor a chair, then seated himself opposite, "have you heard anything about the young man we spoke of, since I last saw you?"

"A good deal," answered the captain; "I went on a cruise on purpose while we were repairing the packet last voyage. He has married a squire's daughter. Ingledew is the gentleman's name. He is somewhere in London now. I saw an old Parson, who will call upon you

in a day or two. He buried Mr. Pashley at Sutton-cum-Bottesford, where the explosion took place. It was one of those d—d high-pressure boilers, where it 's either burst or blow-up. But it was the first and will be the last I'll ever walk the deck over."

"Married, is he? and to the daughter of Squire Ingledew?" said the lawyer, screwing his mouth up, as if he was about to whistle. "Oh, oh! this is very strange!" and he took down a strong square box, labelled P, No. 1, and was soon busied in the perusal of its contents. After a time, he turned round and said, "Was the worthy clergyman, of whom you spake,—Freedom, or Preedom, I forget which,—was he aware that the name of the gentleman he interred was Pashley?"

"I should think not," replied the captain; "for he called him Malvern, poor Mr. Malvern, a many times over. And the good old man had a deal to do to keep from crying. I was so sorry, that I offered him a quid out of my tobacco-box; but he shook my hand, and said, he never 'chewed.' I offered to stand a glass or two of rum; he shook his head, and thanked me, and said he never drank spirits He invited me in to take a cup of tea; but I told him, a stiff glass of rum, or a bottle of stout, a biscuit, and a piece of salt beef, was all the tea I ever took. He's a fine old fellow is that parson. If I lived near him, I should go to his Church every Sunday. I did go into his house, and he sent out for some rum for me, and got me a pipe and some tobacco, but the smoke made him cough, so I soon laid the pipe down, and took to a quid. You'll like him, lawyer; I know you will."

But the lawyer was too much occupied with his papers, to pay any attention to more than the opening sentence of the honest captain's long answer; and when he spoke again, it was only to say, "Did you give Mr. Preedom my address?"

"Not a bit of it!" answered the captain; "don't you know that you told me to act very cautiously?—No, no! you wont catch Jack Austin at that, when mum 's the word!" and the honest sailor clapped the tip of his fore-finger to the side of his nose, then added, "An old captain never gives up his despatches to a stranger, however much he may admire the build of him. You may like a man, and shake hands with him, though next day, duty brings you both broadside to broadside, and you have to fire away into each other like blazes. No, no, my fine fellow, you wont catch me at that!"

The worthy lawyer could not refrain from smiling at the sailor's honest egotism, though he regretted that he had carried out his useless caution so far, especially as so long a time had elapsed since Mr.

Pashley's death, about whom he seemed to know much more than he at present had cause to communicate. "You will look in upon me, again, before you leave London," said the lawyer; "and,—by the way, have you taken lunch?"

The captain confessed he had taken nothing, but a glass of neat rum since breakfast, which he declared to be d—d bad. So the bell was rung, and an order given at once to prepare this neutral meal, although it was just upon the captain's dinner-hour. But a glass of good wine, cold fowl and ham, drove away all further thoughts of dinner for that day. He ate, drank, and talked like a man, and made such a hole in the ham, after all the fowl was eaten, as would have led you to suppose that at least half a dozen lawyers had that morning lunched with Richard Cook, gentleman. He drank up the wine like ale, of which he rarely took less than three imperial pints.

"It was very singular!" said the captain, as his ears got warmed, and his tongue loosed with the choice old wine;—"very singular, that this Mr. Pashley should wish me to bring his writing-desk, and all his papers to you, if anything happened him. I do assure you, sir, he handed them over to me, and asked me to lock them up in my own cabin, just as a man would ask you to take care of his carpet-bag.—And he spoke about life, as I have heard many a fine fellow do, just before an engagement was about to take place. He would have made a fine sailor—would that gentleman! but, lord, sir! he was sent off into eternity like a rocket! He was in heaven (as the sailors say, when any of their shipmates have had their head shot off), before the devil had time to hear of his death; and that's the beauty of being killed in battle. No doctors, nor nurses to bother you—to say, take this, or take that: just one stroke with a hard dumpling, and off you go, sir, into Abraham's bosom, before you know where you are. One puff tears away your canvass, and it's turned into angel-wings in a crack:—this is capital wine!—I should like to drink your health in another bumper before I go.—The ham was rather salt—but a beautiful flavour—I never ate a better!"

Another bottle of wine was uncorked; and the highly-gifted lawyer sat and chatted as familiarly with the honest tar, as if he had enjoyed the society of the greatest barrister on the Bench. Here he revealed the character of the true gentleman. A honest man, no matter what his station might be, so long as he conducted himself with propriety, he treated like a brother; for he had not gathered all his knowledge from books. He had studied men, as well as the law; could soar with

eagles, when he had no other companions, or content himself, for an hour or two, with the 'chirp-chirp' of the homely house-sparrow. A sparrow can build such a nest, as would baffle the ingenuity of a man; and could it talk to us, your honour, we might learn something by listening to it. We once had a dear, old grandfather, who used to say,— "Never despise nothing, nor nobody; I once would have given a shilling for a pin or a bit of a string, when I lost both my buttons; but I took off my neckerchief, and tied it round me. We never know what will be of use to us, until we need it." Our good old grandad was a rural and rude philosopher—we have not forgotten him. The captain and the lawyer separated, well satisfied with one another.

A great change had come over Godfrey Malvern since he received the letter from Emma; and he seemed to feel more acutely the deep injury he had inflicted upon his affectionate wife. The keen, love-watching eye of Maria soon detected this change, for she had long since learned to read Godfrey's every look: he could not now deceive her. Added to this, the strange, silent alteration—which was only visible in his troubled countenance—took place at a time when she most needed his kindness, and that was on the day she had so unexpectedly met with Mrs. Gruff. Maria said but little;—she only threw out reproaches against herself; and after many entreaties, she persuaded Godfrey to let her read the letter, which she knew he had received from Emma. She read it through to herself, her dark eyes brightening and expanding to their full lustre, while the colour forsook her cheeks; and when she had finished the last line, she fell back senseless upon the sofa, uttering but one exclamation, and that was, 'Oh, my God!' For a long time she remained cold as death; then changed to a high, burning fever. A doctor was sent for, and he did all that his skill could devise. The kind landlady attended upon her like a mother.

Here leave we her until the morrow. Godfrey Malvern sat up with her until long past midnight; then went home—a sad and sorrowful man—to his lodgings in Lock's Fields. How he reached home, he knew not—he thought not: he seemed to walk as men do in their sleep;—he threaded his way through the dark streets without ever once thinking of where he was going; for his thoughts were then with the poor suffering Maria. He took out his latch-key, and opened the door, as he had before done scores of times: he walked up-stairs to his room, and it was not until a strong light flashed upon him from the open door, that he remembered where he was. Like a man awakening from a dream, he entered his apartment, and found himself clasped

suddenly by the arms of Emma. One kiss she gave him; then sank sobbing upon his bosom.

He spoke no kind word—he returned not her embrace; but with averted face, pressed his hand to his forehead, while every muscle of his fine countenance revealed his deep and silent agony. Even his little son (whom he had never before seen) seemed to stretch out his tiny arms as if to embrace his father, and to struggle to release himself from poor dear Cinderella. And there stood Godfrey Malvern, overwhelmed with shame, sorrow, and remorse. Guilt in the embrace of Innocence! without either power or will to resist its captor. If he had one thought which stood out from another at that moment, it was embodied in a wish that the earth might open and swallow him up for ever.

"What is the matter, my love?" said Emma, raising her head and gazing on him with a look of alarm, through her tears. "Oh, how very ill you look! Godfrey, do speak to me;—tell me the worst;—something has happened;—conceal it not from me, my dear husband;—tell your own fond Emma;—oh, speak to me, and him." She turned round, snatched up the child, and held it to her husband.

Godfrey made a motion with his hand, as if he entreated her to desist: what he said was inaudible; and he sank upon a chair, burying his face in his hand. Emma bent over him, still holding the child in one arm, while with the other she encircled the neck of her husband, until gradually both her own weight and that of the child fell full upon Godfrey; and in removing his arm, he unconsciously encircled them both; and as Emma's foot slipt, she fell across his knee, with her face towards him, while the child lay between them, and one of its uplifted hands fell on the father's lips. He kissed the hand of the child, then drew Emma's face still closer, and heaving a deep sigh (a melancholy prelude), kissed her round, ripe lips, then burst into tears; while such a deep groan shook his bosom, as caused Emma to spring up in alarm; and giving the child to Cinderella, her arms in another moment encircled her husband.

Godfrey felt a swimming sensation in the head—a dizziness that was fast verging towards a swoon—and a low, sinking pain about the heart, which seemed to make him feel weaker than a child; and he would have sunk upon the floor, if his wife had not held him. But her arms —her touch—her look—her voice—dispelled all this in an instant. He unloosed her hold gently, but firmly; and standing up, looked round and said, "I must leave you;" and without his hat, made towards the door.

"Leave me!" exclaimed Emma, gazing in speechless astonishment upon him for a brief second of time; then making but one spring towards him, and hanging with all her weight around his neck, while she burst into tears, she said, "What have I done, that you should wish to leave me? Oh, God! there is some mystery which I know not. Let me know the worst, Godfrey;—I can bear it all; but do not again leave me. You shall not leave me!" The child began to cry, as if to keep Cinderella company, and that sound did much towards recalling Godfrey Malvern back again to his true self.

"This is misery—madness!" said Godfrey, placing Emma on a chair. "I know not what I am doing to-night. I was not prepared to meet with you so suddenly: I am not well. A few minutes' walk in the night air will restore me. I will not stop more than a few minutes." Then walking across the room to reach his hat, he muttered to himself, "Oh, God! she may be dead."

"I will go with you," said Emma, rising to put on her bonnet. Godfrey turned round with almost a stern look, and was about to speak, when Mrs. Hopkins entered the room, saying, "You are not surely going out at this time of the morning, Mr. Malvern; it is past two o'clock, and rains heavily." Hopkins, who stood without, also requested permission to come in, and was soon seated beside the fire.

There is nothing which brings a man sooner to his senses, than when strangers break suddenly upon him: that is, supposing him neither to be raving mad, nor insensibly drunk; but to have a tolerable share of respect, both for himself and those who belong to him: for these remarks extend not to your thorough-bred, low blackguards. Godfrey Malvern scarcely knew what he was doing;—the sudden transition from the sick-bed of Maria, to the presence of his wife and child, was almost more than a man of his sensitive nature could endure. He seemed to have a right to divide himself;—his existence was neither here nor there;—his thoughts and feelings flitted from one object to the other;—both very dear to him, and Maria needing the most comfort, in her present state of fever and suffering. He more than once fancied that he heard her call his name;—that he felt her burning hand upon his face; and he started in his seat, and looked wildly and hurriedly around, forgetting that the beautiful eyes of his own fond Emma were transfixed upon him. Still he kept replying to Hopkins, though vague and incoherent were his answers.

But by degrees Godfrey grew calmer, and Hopkins knowing that he was fond of a cigar, proposed to smoke one with him, while Godfrey

drank up brandy as if it had been pure water; but it seemed to take very little effect upon him. Deep mental anguish is stronger than the strongest drink. The troubled spirit cannot be quieted by liquor, no more than sleep can be procured at times under the administration of the most powerful opiates. Emma went to-bed, and Mrs. Hopkins left the room; and it was near upon daylight when Godfrey still sat with Hopkins, listening to the 'wondrous tale' he was recounting about Squire Ingledew. His adventures did much towards diverting Godfrey's thoughts from Maria; and many months after, Godfrey Malvern drew up the few brief notes on which we have founded our present story. Hopkins went still further, recounted his first meeting with Emma, his picking up Gregory Gruff's letter, and falsely obtaining the money which he had adopted to his own use; and ended by offering to refund every farthing, and humbly begging to be forgiven. Godfrey was not then in a state of mind to be at enmity with any living being; for his own conscience accused him with being himself a sinner of the deepest dye, and in return he not only forgave Hopkins, but communicated to him all that had befallen the erring and beautiful Maria. Hopkins listened to him attentively, and in silence; and having discovered that Gregory Gruff only was in the secret, advised him to make no mention of it to Emma.

"Telling her," argued Hopkins, "would not undo the evil which is already done. Painful as the remembrance of it must ever be to you—it is useless inflicting it upon your wife. 'What the heart never knows, it never feels!' is a wise old saying. It might, were it known to her, be the cause of you both living together in unhappiness for ever! I know, that to a man of your open and candid nature it will be very painful to keep such a secret; but when you consider how much your wife will suffer if she ever becomes acquainted with it, and what a deal of misery it will save her if she remains in ignorance, why, if you have still that love for her which I believe you to have, as a man, lock it up in your own bosom, until you are found out. I am an old sinner! and this is my advice."

Reader, though thou mayest be a saint, thou couldst not have offered better. It would have been very wicked, and very cruel, to have broken the peace of mind of so amiable and affectionate a woman as Emma—it could have done no good. It might have broken her heart, but it never could have healed the wound. Many are to be found more ready to proclaim sin into the listening ears of the wide world than to forgive the sinner! Many a good and penitent man has been

transported, has seen the error of his ways, and having resolved to sin no more, has, when he became really good, been sent away to 'pave hell with his good intentions,' the iron earth having refused to receive his good seed into her spotless and unsullied soil. It would but be encouraging crime, says some over-devout, good-meaning, in-kneed Christian. Mind, Mr. Maw-worm, that poor fellow does not jostle thee in heaven, shouldst thou chance to get there, which is ten to one if thou dost! Encourage crime! '*God encourages crime!—to come to heaven*'—He forgives it, and holds out His almighty arms to receive sinners who are really penitent. He would kick a muck-worm of a grovelling saint from off the golden battlements of heaven, to make room for a humble-hearted and truly contrite sinner. He has written it in His Holy Book. A sinner, forsooth, can forgive sinners! There is no iron cant about his soul!—he hates it! Bring him a brother sinner in tears, and thou, Mr. Saint, wouldst blush to behold the meeting. Thee it would contaminate but to touch his garment—him it will make look like an angel! and over the high turrets of heaven will lean many a welcome, forgiving, and holy countenance, with parted lips, ready to proclaim God's victory!

There was a letter on the table from Squire Ingledew, inviting Godfrey Malvern to call upon him at the earliest opportunity. This letter Godfrey answered before he retired to his bed (not to rest!). He could not find the seal which he generally used, so took an old one out of his writing-desk, with which he sealed the letter. He then gave Hopkins the address of Maria, requesting him to visit her as soon as it was daylight, and to report the state of her health. And giving him strict orders both about Maria, and posting the letter, he went to-bed.

CHAPTER LI.

IN WHICH WE RIDE ROUGH-SHOD OVER MANY THINGS; GET OVER A DEAL OF GROUND AND A MANY DIFFICULTIES; AND DRAW MUCH NEARER TO THE LAST STAGE OF OUR JOURNEY, THAN WE HAVE HITHERTO DONE IN ANY PREVIOUS CHAPTER.

WHAT Mrs. Gruff might have further said or done, on meeting with Gregory under such suspicious circumstances, we must leave to the

reader to imagine: one thing, however, is certain; the appearance of the stranger with the blue bag, had spoilt all. No sooner had Gruff got rid of Maria, than he turned his attention to his wife; and great was his astonishment to hear another call her by that not-very-much-to-be-coveted title. Nor was he left long in ignorance; for, on Mrs. Gruff again opening her eyes, she gave another shriek, and exclaimed, "Oh, God!—it's Copley!"

"You may say that, and not be very far from the truth!" answered her philosophic quondam husband. "And are you not glad to see me?"

"Glad to see you?" echoed Mrs. Gruff; "I thought you had been safe in Botany Bay five years ago! Why, I received a letter stating that you were dead!"

"No doubt I should have been long ago, if I had spent half of that time with you!" answered her former husband; "and as to the rumour about my being transported, why, the fact is, I never yet did anything worthy of being sent to prison for, unless it was the leaving of you! And to tell the truth, ma'am, I should rather have chosen transportation of the two, had the choice been left to me, whether I preferred that or living with you. But I heard of your getting married to a Mr. Clarkson. I suppose this is the gentleman!" added he, bowing to our friend Gregory.

"I am very happy to say, I have not that honour," replied Gruff, making up a very comical kind of countenance, as he, with mock gravity, returned the compliment. "That gentleman has been dead some time; and I was this lady's husband, until I had the pleasure of meeting with you!"

"Pleasure, do you call it?" answered Mrs. Gruff;—"I'll have you to know, sir——"

"Stop, ma'am," said Gregory; "this is not a fit place to discuss such a matter;" and laying hold of the quondam husband, lest he should escape, Gruff requested a policeman to order a hackney-coach, saying, "We will talk this subject over when we reach home. And you, sir, must accompany us."

Gregory Gruff was a very firm man, when it became necessary to act; and as Mr. Copley (for such was the name of Mrs. Gruff's former husband) found that he must either accompany his wife, or be dragged to the station-house, he made a virtue of necessity, and chose the former.

Into the hackney-coach they got—Mrs. Gruff, Mary, and the baby occupying one side, while her two husbands took up the other.

Copley did not seem at all dismayed; but chatted the whole of the way, as if nothing uncommon was the matter. He congratulated Mrs. Gruff on the improvement in her looks, hoped that, if the worst came to the worst, he should find her temper had also grown better; and telling Gregory that unless such was the case, he should prefer being a travelling stationer somewhere in America, instead of London, and that he only ran away from her because he was afraid of his life, adding, by way of a wind-up, "I do not know how you have found her turn out, —but, for my part, I would as leave live with the devil as her, unless her temper is altered!"

All these remarks Mrs. Gruff treated with silent contempt; for fainting was useless now. Before her sat the two living proofs; and one was not to be trifled with. As for the other, whatever deception he might have practised, he was still her husband, and the law must confirm his claims.

Gruff reached his lodgings; ordered a policeman to be in readiness in the passage, desired Mr. Copley to walk up-stairs, leaving Mary and the 'babby' to bring up the rear, as Mary exclaimed, "Gracious goodness, master!—this is worse than finding the 'babby!' I wonder whatever you'll bring home next."

Parson Preedom had been waiting for some time in the drawing-room; and great was his astonishment at recognising two old acquaintances at once; for Mrs. Gruff had shown the parson a letter, with other proofs (which, deponent stateth not how she came by) to prove the death of Copley soon after his arrival on board the hulks, at Woolwich, the only mistake being, that they referred to another man of the same name; and these proofs, the true Copley had not thought it worth his while to contradict, although he was not ignorant of the use his wife had made of them. Indeed, he had more than once written to her; but if she received his letters, she had taken good care to destroy them. She married and buried Clarkson, without any one troubling her; and having had such good success, no marvel she made another venture, and secured Gruff. Gregory had but very little to state, as Parson Preedom knew the old husband much better than he did. As for Mrs. Gruff, she sat down and sobbed, but said nothing; and when the parson suggested the necessity of keeping Copley in safe custody, until the affair could be investigated before the proper authorities, it was then that Mrs. Gruff sprang up, and said, "No! if he goes to prison, I will go with him! I always liked him better than I did any other of my husbands—though he did leave me! Perhaps it was because he let me have my own way

the least of any of them;—James, I never loved but you!——had Jimmy lived, but——"

This was one of Nature's homely outburstings! The memory of the little 'Jimmy' they had buried, was the only object that for years had haunted Mrs. Gruff's breast—it had preponderated over all her love of finery, and hung on the mists of her sweeping ambition, as if to pull her back to Nature! And before her stood the father of that long-lost child—he himself a man, with a few good qualities, and a lion's resolution never to be conquered by a woman. He had beaten Mrs. Gruff, locked her up in her room, and tried every experiment to quell her horrible temper. They had fought, been friends, forgiven each other a thousand times,—'kissed, and made it up!'—then renewed the quarrel; and Copley finding that there was no cure but killing her, after much patience, and many fights, at last beat a retreat; still Mrs. Gruff had never forgotten him. "He had a spirit!" she would at times exclaim, when talking to her neighbours and gossips; "but Jim was a dear fellow after all; it was a pleasure to fall out with him, and then make it up again—I shall never forget him!"

Both women and men have strange fancies, which there is no accounting for. They at times take a liking to the most ugly and objectionable things! and no one can tell why they do so. Nay, if you question them in their reasonable moments, they cannot tell you. Perhaps Mrs. Gruff liked her former husband because he beat her; or, perchance, it was solely that he liked to have his own way as well as herself. Be this as it may, she went up to him, and laying hold of his arm, said, "They shall not part us!"

Gruff took two or three huge pinches of snuff, which told as plainly as language could speak, that 'he did not half like it.' He thought that, were it only for decency's sake, his wife ought not to have given him up without something like a show of struggling with her feelings. But then he was nearly twenty years older than Copley, and old enough to be his wife's father. "D—n them!" said Gruff, "it's no use; the younger a man is, the better some of the women like him. Your fatherly old fellows, somehow or another, are never much cared for as husbands. We are but 'dear old fellows,' or 'good old fellows,' after all, just as we buy a new cashmere, or a costly silk dress. And they only get these things that others may admire them. I would try the Indies if the climate was not so hot. I wouldn't care if my wife was a negress, so long as she loved me for myself alone. I'll emigrate, by —!"

"And leave the poor babby and myself!" said Mary, holding up the little innocent. "How can you be so cruel?"

Just then three other characters joined in the scene. They had obtained entrance, and were determined to have an interview. These were Dark Dick, Arabella, and Jane, the long-lost mother of the 'babby!'

Gruff knew the poor girl again in a moment; and altnough a cloud darkened for an instant his good-natured countenance, it passed even as a cloud does pass, that for a brief second of time has dimmed the golden sunshine. It faded away as the poor girl sprang forward, and exclaiming, "Oh! my dear child!" fainted while she threw her arms around it.

Dark Dick, albeit no orator, while he held his hat in one hand, and kept turning it round, as he rubbed it with his coat-cuff, delivered 'a round unvarnished tale,' which made a deep impression on the hearts of both the Parson and Gregory Gruff. He named Hopkins, whom Parson Preedom knew, and whose history he was not ignorant of; for he had had a long conversation with him on the previous night, and gathered much that related to Squire Ingledew. He spoke of the brutal Bill, and the oath he had forced poor Jane to take to compel her to destroy the child. Then he turned to Arabella, and spoke of her as his intended wife; and ended by adding,—"We have both seen the error of our ways, and are resolved to lead better lives for the future."

Parson Preedom never in all his life delivered a better sermon than he did in that room. Every eye was filled with tears except Gruff's! and although there was a moisture about the old man's eye-lashes, he tried to conceal it by looking at his snuff, as if to say, "This is much stronger than usual!" but it was the feeling of his fine old manly heart, and not the snuff, that caused his eyes to become dim. Even the *widow* of two living husbands, Mrs. Copley, *alias* Gruff, pressed the arm of her oldest, though youngest husband, and he dropped his blue-bag unconsciously on the floor, while she leant upon his bosom, and had 'her cry out.'

The iron countenance of Dark Dick changed from an olive swarthiness to a dark ashy grey, while he listened to the simple eloquence of Parson Preedom; and Arabella sank upon her knees, and with clasped hands would have fallen on the floor, had not her head come in contact with the pious old clergyman, and he held her hot hands within his own, as he still continued to talk, while she wept like a child.

But ever and anon floated the whisperings of Mary to Jane between his remarks; and 'tops and bottoms,' a 'spoonful of Godfrey's Cordial,' 'has cut one tooth,' and 'not had the measles,' came in oddly between such sentences, as '*even in the eleventh hour there is hope of forgiveness*'—'*though thy brother offend thee*,' and so on. But poor Jane was too happy with her child to think of death, and Mary had too much to say, so could only cry as she caught up some heart-searching sentence.

Parson Preedom, be it remembered, was a man well read in the great Book of Life: he knew that the temptations which beset youth are innumerable, and was also well acquainted with the privations which virtue, amid poverty, has to encounter, to obtain only bread. He read the newspapers; and blushed for his country, when he saw recorded the hours which thousands of young Englishwomen are compelled to labour, too often for little more than sixpence or ninepence a-day; and he thanked God that so much virtue was still to be found amongst our poor over-laboured countrywomen—such patient endurance under trials that would almost tempt an angel to rebel. He had seen the world—had beheld the poor sempstress in the street—her wan patient countenance, meek as a seraph's, and her white lips scarcely parted with a murmur, though her sufferings were silently breaking her heart. He had seen similar faces in other lights, amid scenes such as *we have dared to describe!* and he half-hated the country that would afford them no better protection—that left them no alternative but slavery beyond the power of women, starvation, or the street. Good and pious as he was, he well knew that it was useless to erect so many churches in a country, where the chief essentials of Christianity were so much neglected; that the glad tidings of the gospel might as well be preached into the deaf ears of the wind, as spread amongst a people who were hungering for the common necessaries of life; and that He, who 'feedeth the young ravens when they cry,' had given to mankind a different creed. Neither did he marvel that so many unbelievers were found, who doubted the Truth of a Religion, and the Faith of a Country, where so many of its inhabitants were unprovided with their 'daily bread.' '*He beheld the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power.*'

Parson Preedom was not a man to consign such poor sinners as then stood before him, to that dark-vaulted and fiery hell, which so many are passed into from the pulpit, by the Lucifer-match-venders

of our own days who seem as familiar with the strength that is to scorch others, as salamanders. No; he bade them go their way, 'and sin no more. He was no agent for that forbidding Fire-office below; but pointed to the summit of Calvary—to the rugged cross, that reared high and tall against the sky, as if it leaned on heaven!—to the great agony of Him, whose white and thorn-pierced brow shone through the deepening twilight that gathered over the silent streets of Jerusalem, when a God gave Himself up for a sacrifice, to stay the red right-hand of the Omnipotent. Parson Preedom himself, with his long white hair, and his meek venerable countenance, on which a faint sunlight fell, looked not unlike one of the Apostles, as he stood and preached repentance to the sinners assembled before him. Even Mrs. Gruff, for once in her life, forgot all about costly carriages, and rich dresses, and thought it would be no bad thing to die a good Christian, after all;—while the iron face of Dark Dick relaxed in its strong expression, and he stood like the mutinous mariner, on deck beside Columbus, looking towards the newly-discovered country, as if he had just awakened from a dream.

After a time, Lawyer Cook entered the room, to consult with Parson Preedom on matters of important business; for they had already become acquainted with each other, and had had more than one interview with Hopkins. The able lawyer was soon in possession of all that related to Mrs. Copley, Gruff, and her two husbands, and was not long in bringing the affair to an amicable arrangement. Gruff consented to allow his wife a small annuity, which, with the consent of her former husband, she at once accepted; and this was to be forfeited if she ever attempted to lay any further claim to Gregory as her husband, he, in return, gladly consenting never again to claim her as his wife. By consent of both parties, the 'matter, form, and style' of the documents which were to render their separation legal, was left to Lawyer Cook and Parson Preedom; and a future day was named, on which both parties were to meet, and sign and seal the agreement. So Gruff got rid of his wife, without either a parting-kiss or a falling tear, merely remarking to his friend the Parson, "That it was a good job the young dog never came to claim the Nativity which it had cost him so much labour to cast." There were apartments to let (and no widow) where the worthy clergyman and his niece lodged; and thither our friend Gruff removed in the course of the day, and sat down beside his own hearth, an old bachelor, who had had some experience in matrimony;—a wise widower, whose wife still lived; or, as he himself said, in his own

peculiar idiom, "A man who had been playing the Husband in a new play entitled Marriage, and which was so difficult a character to perform, and required so much exertion, that he never knew the value of his easy chair and slippers, until he had finished the performance, and sat down to rest himself."

Nor did he permit the other characters to depart, who have played their parts in this story, without giving them a few substantial proofs of his kindness. The 'babby' he kissed, requesting that it might be called Gregory, promising that he would neither lose sight of it nor the mother, so long as he found them worthy of his notice. Mary was very loath to part with the child; for she said, "It was company for me of a night, and used to 'snuzzle' to me, and keep me so warm, that I am sure I shall feel lost without it." And she shed a *few* 'natural tears,' as she parted with Jane, promising to come and have a cup of tea with her, as soon as she got 'settled down somewhere.'

Meantime Squire Ingledew still continued to occupy his splendid town-house, in which he spent most of his time alone, in devising plans to prevent the discovery of the rightful heir to that estate, which he had so unjustly possessed himself of. He had, in company with Hopkins, visited the old woman in the workhouse, before Hopkins had been called into consultation by Lawyer Cook. But Betty looked with an averted eye upon the Squire, and shuddered as he approached her, and told her his name, then said, "You remember me, Betty?"

"I remember you but too well," answered the old woman with a solemn shake of the head. "You have caused me many a sleepless night!" and she removed to the farthest corner of the bench as she spoke, while a deep colour mantled for a moment her pale and wrinkled countenance, and flushed it over with such a hue as had never risen there for many, many years. "I do remember you, Mr. Stocks, —the thoughts of you have many a time made me forget my prayers, made me endure hunger without a murmur; and thank God for not punishing me more for the sins which you tempted me to commit! What did you do with the child you tore from me? Where is little George Emerson? If I could but again see him before I die, and hear him say with his own lips that he had forgiven me, I should no longer be afraid of death! I was good until I knew you, sir! You took advantage of my poverty; but I have long since confessed all. Let me see Georgey once more, and I care not how soon I die!"

The old woman spake like one inspired. There was a simplicity, and a deep feeling in what she uttered, that would have sunk into the

heart of any other man but Squire Ingledew's; but him it scarcely affected for more than a passing moment, during which the colour fled his cheek—then his face again sank into its cold iron composure. A dim mist gathered before the old woman's eyes when she had ceased speaking—it cleared away as the tears traversed down the deep furrows which time and trouble had ploughed in her cheeks; and while she gazed on the little garden of the workhouse, which stood before her, the past seemed to spring up, and she fancied that she heard, in the shout of a child who at that moment crossed the yard, the voice of her own little Johnny.

Ingledew pretended to console her, and, like the devil, quoted Scripture to blind his real purpose. He spake of the past, and how easy it was to blot out its remembrance by repentance. He talked of the future, mercy, hope, and heaven, as if he had booked himself for an inside place, paid his fare, and had only to sleep out the long journey; then awaken and find himself and Betty as comfortably situated as a couple of saints who have died in the order of sanctity. Poor Hopkins! he listened attentively to all the Squire said, and would have fallen down and worshipped him, had he not had some doubts about his sincerity, which doubts Hopkins felt from his heart ashamed to entertain. As for ourselves, we have not the shadow of a doubt—the Squire was a thorough hypocrite, a man whose tongue was so accustomed to dissemble and lie, that if ever the truth chanced to trip over, like the fly in amber, 'he wondered how the devil it ever came there!' Before Squire Ingledew took his departure, he offered the old woman a sovereign, but she refused to accept it. There was something dramatic in her look, as, resting upon her stick, she drew her stooping form to its 'highest pitch,' and averting her furrowed face, she stretched out her withered arm, and said, "No! were I only to touch your gold, I should feel as if I had been mocking my Maker for many long years, with prayers, and tears, and sighs, and He would in justice again visit my old knees with the pains and cramps which left me whenever I knelt before Him to confess my sins. I would rather do without my tea, my sugar, and my bit of snuff, until the day of my death, than receive it from you. Let me but see little George before I die, then I will forgive you, but not until then!" And the old woman hobbled off into the workhouse, to take her water-gruel, every spoonful of which, though slowly, helped her a little nearer towards the tomb. Great Gomorrahs of the Grave are those Union Workhouses!—their roofs only secured from the blazing bolts of Heaven by the patient suf-

fering they shelter! The time will come, when like 'the cities of the plain,' no trace will remain to tell of their 'whereabout,' saving the liquid hell into which they have dissolved! This prophecy will be fulfilled, although it is not written in the 'Book of the Prophets.'

And now our readers are fully prepared for a long lawsuit. Councillors who plead, and judges who sum up, with a long list of jurymen, who may be either very clear or very thick-headed, just as the summons happens to alight upon them. For innocence and honesty are more often found together than talent and truth. Gold on gold is bad heraldry; and although it enriches, sometimes it spoils a very pretty device. Our court will be a court of conscience, not in name only, but in 'very deed!' where justice sits in silence, and no wind from the war of words ruffles the dust within her balance. That man was a poet who first drew Justice in this attitude. There is a simple grandeur in the very look of her. Whether the original idea is to be found in the Bible or in Homer, we know not at this moment; but in either the one or the other it is sure to be discovered. The ancients had a fine perception; they looked for grandeur only in simplicity, and sought for the finest images of truth in the great storehouse of Nature!

In this book we have attempted to copy *them*. Are the characters we have limned, like life?—are they natural?—or one great unmeaning lie? Reader! we have but painted the truth. The back-ground of our picture may appear dark—we may have used a little art to bring out our colours now and then; but are the figures life-like! or are they not? The grey morning is already streaming through the chinks of our window-shutter, as it hath many a time done, while we have been busily adding page to page to complete this work; but like the sculptor of old, who attempted the statue of Truth, we shall at last leave our labour unfinished! We began to chisel her naked, and have ended by reducing her 'fair proportions,' as the world is not yet in a fit state to look upon her. So we have covered her sighs and her sorrows with deep drapery!—have buried her face beneath a flow of the hood—have looped up her love in a mantle; and, in a word, hidden at times our design of naked truth under an un-English toga.

"*We* dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none."—SHAKSPEARE.

CHAPTER LII.

"IN THE GRAVE THERE IS NO COMPANY."—*Chaucer*.

ON EARTH THERE IS NOTHING MORE CERTAIN THAN DEATH.

A Saying, old as Granite.

THROUGHOUT the long dark November night, Maria tossed upon her uneasy bed, like a doomed and crazy vessel, that, without either rudder or chart, is left to the mercy of a tempestuous, and dangerous sea.—Before morning she became light-headed; and, in addition to a fierce fever, began to evince symptoms of premature labour, which, after a brief interval of agony, ended in her becoming the unconscious mother of a dead child. After this she slept for a short space of time (if that may be called sleep, in which the disordered thoughts are still kept awake, and are ever breaking forth in incoherent sentences from the white and fevered lips). Dr. Gattley had remained with her all the night; and, inured as he was to scenes of misery, and death, there was something so touching, about the fate of that beautiful young mother, and her dead infant, that he seemed rivetted to her bed-side, and watched over her with a feeling and an interest, such as he had not felt for any patient for many a long day. His deeply-marked olive countenance, seamed with the furrows which long years of intense study in his profession had left behind, assumed a softer and more mournful expression than it usually wore; and there was a trace of mental anguish on his high, brown, intellectual forehead, and a mark of deep thought on his bushy and overhanging brows, which told plainly of the sympathy he felt in the sufferings of that beautiful and fond-hearted woman. And when Godfrey entered the room on the following morning, there was something stern in the Doctor's very whisper, as he said, "Sir, you have killed Maria!" then took the burning hand of the fair patient within his own, as if to count the feeble pulsation, though in reality to hide his countenance amid the folds of the bed-curtains, and to conceal the tears which stole noiselessly down his hard, manly cheeks.

But Godfrey Malvern needed no Accuser: on a chair beside the bed, stretched on a white pillow, and covered with a napkin in hue 'like new-fallen snow,' was laid 'that sinless child of sin,' mute and beautiful, as if it had been newly chiselled out of the whitest marble, and

with the fine outline of Maria's features wrought upon it, as on a bust in miniature. Maria awoke, as he stooped down to kiss the dead child, and placed her hand within his, while she faintly whispered, "I thought I should never have seen you again, Godfrey!—Oh,—I have been very ill!—I feared I should die without seeing you!—I prayed that I might live to see you once more, and kiss you before I died!—God hath answered my prayer, Godfrey!—I heard his angels singing to me whilst I slept—they came to carry my dear baby into heaven.—I saw a light like the sun, and it awoke me—and—I am very thirsty—the water they gave me was warm—give me some—cold—cold—my feet are very cold—but my poor head burns and aches—oh, how it aches!—my baby—lay it beside me—on that side—on my heart—that heart, Godfrey, which never loved but you—will soon be cold—very cold.—Come nearer—let me put my arm round your neck—so—and my baby——" She turned to kiss it, as it was placed beside her; and, folding her hands on her breast, said, "Now let me die, and carry with me all that I ever loved into heaven!" She then closed her eyes; and with clasped hands, and arms enfolding Godfrey and the child, breathed forth a silent prayer; the low whispering of her voice only broken by the deep heart-rending sobs of Godfrey Malvern, as he knelt down with his head resting upon her bosom, while the kind-hearted landlady hung, weeping, over the bed.

And so she died!—she breathed her last breath on the lips of Godfrey Malvern!—her last look was on his face!—his name the last word on her lips! and they closed for ever ere the last syllable of that name was uttered. Her breath departed between the utterance of God—and Godfrey. It might be that the angel of Death stepped in and severed the word, and carried the spirit, with the Holy Name upon its silent lips, into heaven!—Who can tell?

Peace to her memory! Maria thou wilt now—

"Fear no more the lightning-flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finished joy and moan:
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust."—CYMBELINE.

What a void there seemed in that parlour, into which Godfrey Malvern, half broken-hearted, was conveyed! The folding-doors opened into the bed-room; behind those doors lay the dead:—before them, all spoke of the living. There lay her music, the songs she had sung

the words were there, but the voice which gave to them such sweet utterance, life, and feeling, was now mute. Death had snapped the strings asunder. And there lay a Book in which she had read much of late: it was the Holy Bible. Skeins of silk, and slips of paper were still within its pages. The Book of Job, and the Psalms (penned by Israel's repentant Poet), were studded, like a chart, with those land-marks, which seem ever pointing to Eternal Life and the peaceful shores beyond the grave:—Signals of Salvation, planted by the hand of God Himself along the rocky coast of Life, to guide the storm-tost and troubled soul into the tranquil haven of Heaven, '*where all tears are wiped from our eyes*' by the hand of His 'ministering angels.' A half-finished landscape lay upon the table, beautiful, but hard; it wanted the light throwing in upon it; the fine touch, and the delicate hand;—but that hand was now cold and heavy:—even the drawing itself looked dead, as if the night had come down at once upon it, or turned back upon the Morning, just as it was breaking into Day. There lay a silk glove, with its embroidery unfinished; the stem of the rose was there, but the flower and the bud were wanting; there was a trace — a faint outline, which you might fancy had once been filled in, but the centre was blank now—bud and flower had vanished. Her bonnet and shawl had been hung hastily behind the door: the bonnet fronted you, and looked like Maria. You saw only *her* face within it; it matched no other countenance: it seemed made to fit her fine face only, to hold the long clusters of her dark hair. Oh! she was very beautiful! Her slippers were laid upon the hearth-rug. You knew to what foot they had belonged: their small size and beautiful shape, would become none other but Maria. Her necklace was upon the mantel-piece; her side-combs were placed beside it; a light-blue satin turn-over hung across a chair back; near it was suspended a silk-bag; a child's cap, unfinished, stood on the side-board, together with a little frock: the tasteful embroidery about the front of that little frock, had occupied Maria many a long hour. The beautiful forms into which she had twined the flowers, and worked them one within the other, has rarely been excelled. What love died with her death!—How she would have idolized that child, although she had no husband to call it father! And would that love have been less holy, because it was mingled with the blush of shame? Is the blushing maiden-rose less lovely than its crimson-cheeked sister, because it weareth the tinge of MODEST SHAME? No; both are very lovely; though the paler beauty is said to have been touched in Eden by Eve, after she fell.—

Yet beautiful was our first mother with all her sin; and the angel, who leaned over the gates of Paradise, watching her as she departed with Adam, in the evening sunset, heaved a sigh, and breathed a prayer, wishing that it were his lot to lead her forth; though beyond he saw only the bare desolate landscape, that stretched for miles, wild and barren, to the very edge of the sky, without the walls of Eden.

Maria would have clung to her child, had they both lived, although she had been compelled to wander forth, weeping, into the wilderness, like Hagar, when she led forth Ishmael, and turned with half-averted head and scornful look upon Abraham, as she parted with him in the early morning, with the bottle of water, and loaf of bread hanging over her white shoulder. And that God, who heard her voice, and said, '*What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not*,' would not have forsaken Maria;—for God is more merciful than man.

If there is one thing we hate more than another, in this beautiful world, filled with so many things that a poet can love, it is a hard, cast-iron, would-be saint—so cold, irony, and unfeeling is his nature, though modelled into the acknowledged form of an angel.—Such a man we would not sit by the side of. And yet there are many such in this world; fellows who sink souls as they would ships, and leave them to perish at the first discovery of a leak, idle men too lazy to work at the pumps,—and they are 'dearly beloved by the devil! Hard-hearted pastors, who would have consigned Maria and her baby to that hell, which they themselves shudder only to think upon. What glorious fellows were the old divines!—what a treat to have lived with them, to have known them, as Shakspeare and Milton must have done, in their day. But we knew Parson Preedom, we know him now, and to know him reconciles us to the whole race—time-servers, and living-hunters albeit too many of them are. Thank God! they are not all bad.

Turn we now to Squire Ingledew, who had found it necessary to prolong his stay in London, at this very unfashionable season of the year. It was evening, not yet dark, when he stood at the windows of his drawing-room, looking out upon the extensive square, which had now a desolate and deserted appearance, the inhabitants having either retired to their country residences, or gone away to squander their gold in foreign countries, having cut England for a time, and universally voted it to be only a great bore, in which tradesmen failed, and artisans starved for want of employment; as if they had no concern whatever with such a country: although the very wealth which made them

wings to fly to these foreign and fashionable places of amusement, was plucked from the featherless bodies they had left behind. Not, be it remembered, that Squire Ingledew thought or cared for a moment about such matters as these; he would much rather, had he had his own way, have been with some gay party at Paris, or taking his dinner at the dearest hotel which skirts the Rhine, providing he could have done so with safety to himself. The Squire looked out on the almost empty square, and, although there were cabs and hackney-coaches in abundance, he missed the aristocratic roll of his neighbours' carriages, whose wealthy owners were miles away, while many of the servants remained behind on board-wages; still the scene was but very little changed, for the servants had also parties to give, and friends to invite. John, the butler, sat the head of *his* table, and took wine with his friend, the footman, just as he had seen his master take it with his wealthiest guest; while the chamber-maid and cook, for one evening in their lives 'aped the lady,' and sat as erect as if they had never either made a bed, or scoured a saucepan. They went to the theatre in cabs, returned home to supper, and criticised the new tragedy of 'Greenacre,' just as their 'betters' did the performance at the Italian Opera; and although Polly, the cook, had neither heard Rubini, nor Lablache, still she thought the man who sang 'All round my hat,' a 'wery wulgar wocalist.'—Squire Ingledew stood with his hands in his pocket, whistling an odd kind of air, which seemed to partake occasionally of the 'Old Hundredth Psalm,' and 'Old King Cole,' and sometimes he turned to look at a packet or two which lay on the table, as if he did not at all like their appearance; and then he suspended his low whistle, without altering his mouth, for he had received a few hints from Lawyer Cook, which he well knew he must attend to, whether he liked them or not. In a word, the wide acres of Sutton-cum-Bottesford seemed, every hour, to be melting away from his grasp.

Another packet of papers had arrived from the Lawyer, together with letters from Hopkins, Parson Preedom, and Godfrey Malvern, the last of which was a promise from Godfrey, intimating that he should call upon him the very first opportunity.

Time wore away, as it ever does, whether our thoughts are merrily or sadly employed. Time wore away, and tore on like a railway engine, which has no business to perform, except to reach its journey's end; whether conveying its passengers to a marriage or a funeral, makes no difference in its progress;—and at the appointed time, (dictated only by the coming darkness,) the servant brought in lights, and Squire

Ingledew sat down to his table; but little dreaming of the consequence of the correspondence which lay before him. He opened the seal of the bulky packet first, read of Mr. Pashley's death,—saw the Captain's evidence regarding the unfortunate explosion, then broke into a cold sweat, and turned away his head as if he was afraid to read any further.

At length he laid down the painful document, and took up Parson Preedom's letter. The words, 'watch and seal, in possession of the deceased, given to Godfrey Malvern,' was all he read, as his eye alighted upon the seal of Godfrey's letter, and there he beheld, boldly and distinctly impressed upon the red wax, the ARMS OF THE EMMERSONS, and saw as clearly as if the handwriting had been written in letters of fire on the wall, that Godfrey Malvern was the rightful heir to the estate of Sutton-cum-Bottesford. And, amid this rush of thought and feeling, arose the vivid conviction that he had played out his great game, and lost all; that his shuffling, and cheating, and hypocrisy, were no longer concealed; for there stood out, bold and bare before him the truth, too palpable to be ever again hidden, and too well-known to be concealed any longer, under the most masterly mask, or wrapt up in the cunningest folds that disguise could invent! Nor was this all, he had turned his head in the direction of the door, and there glowered upon him from out of the half-darkness, a countenance not unlike that of the evil-one, himself; so grim, and fixed, and motionless, it seemed like a face that owned neither body nor any other member; but stood moon-like in the shadow of the doorway. It was a face, marked with melancholy, yet lit up at that moment with silent and savage triumph; some such expression as we may fancy passed over the countenance of Achilles, when he gazed upon the lifeless form of Hector; then recalled the features of Patroclus to his mind. It uttered no word; but slowly and silently changed its expression, until the very eyes looked 'reproof,' and reproach stood written upon the mute and compressed lips, as if they said, 'Thou canst deceive me no longer!'

Squire Ingledew had not power to speak; he sat with his eyes fixed upon that countenance, until it seemed to him every moment to grow larger, and to be drawing nearer,—to shut out every other object, and fill the whole space of the room. His knees shook, and his head burnt, as if the red breath of a fierce furnace fell upon it. He tried to utter the name of 'Hopkins;' but he felt such a choking sensation about the throat as checked his utterance. His brain swam—the room

seemed to whirl round! He attempted to reach the bell, and fell with his head upon the massive bronze fender. That heavy fall shook the house, the servants hurried up-stairs, and beheld their master, senseless and bleeding, stretched across the hearth-rug; his hand grasped in the hand of Hopkins, who stood beside him.

What thoughts rushed through the brain of Edward Stocks during those few brief moments, we cannot tell now. Perchance he recalled the hour when he sought the life of Hopkins, and went disguised into that forbidding court in the Borough, carrying with him the gold, which was to be 'the price of blood;' yet Hopkins had never betrayed his secret, though Ingledew had still continued to deceive the man who had forgiven him,—but he could not forget that the Squire had sought to take away *his life*. It might be, that the remembrance of his conduct towards the poor schoolmaster—the unknown poet whom he had patronised, when he ought to have been standing at his back, and serving him at the very table where he himself sat as master, swelled and broke his heart. Perchance he recalled the scene in Parliament-street, or some humble passage from one of his own daughter's letters, when she and her husband were struggling with difficulties, and sought his help; while he, proud, unfeeling, haughty, and secure in his high station, bade them 'starve, and be d—d!' Or it might be the remembrance of that unbending figure, when Godfrey held up Emma in the street, and saved her from being run over by the wheels of that carriage in which he himself ought by right to have been seated, God only knows! He died, grasping the hand of Hopkins;—that face which he had imagined looked like the countenance of the evil-one, bent over him as he expired. That hand which he had hoped to see cold and stiff, beside the body to which it belonged,—held the cooling draught to his hot lips, and wiped the death-drops from his burning brow. And the first prayer sent up from the heart, to the golden gates of heaven to beg forgiveness for the troubled spirit, that went wailing through the 'gloomy valley and shadow of death,' went winged from the forgiving lips of John Hopkins. Ned Stocks had given up possession, there was no need of law. Justice had given her decision, and no one was found bold enough to dispute her awful verdict! The long-looked-for heir was found in Godfrey Malvern, and right proud were the inhabitants of Buttervote, who had subscribed towards his volume of Poems, when they found that they had been written by Squire Emmerson, of Sutton-cum-Bottesford.

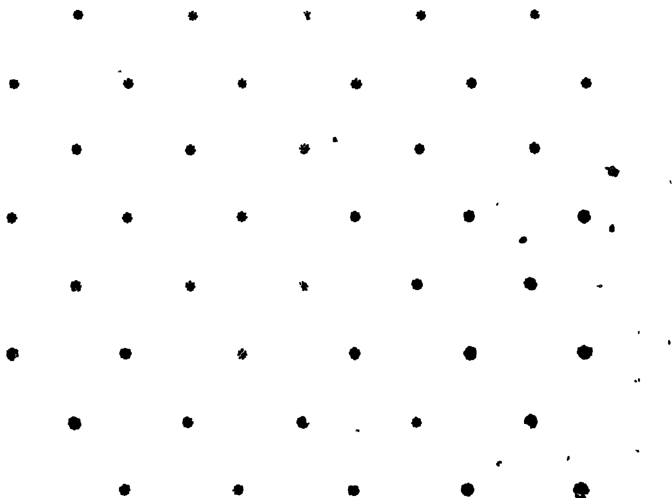
But how shall we describe the agony of the fond and faithful Emma,

now no longer the daughter of an esquire, but married even under a false name, and that too without the knowledge of her husband? She knew not of the guilt of Godfrey, the name of Maria had not yet reached her ears; and he, with all his faults, loved her too well to tell her now. She felt humbled and ashamed of her father when she came to hear all, although she wept over him with a grief and an affection, such as she only could feel! And Godfrey, the noble-hearted, but frail husband, never loved her so dearly as he did when he stood forth the undisputed heir of Sutton-cum-Bottesford—opened his manly arms, and pressed her to his heart whilst he kissed her, and exclaimed, "Weep not, my dear Emma! rich although I am now, I have no wealth to offer thee equivalent to thy long-tried love."

Reader! cast up the account—it is beyond our skill to do it! We dare not place the 'dirty acres' of Sutton-cum-Bottesford in the same balance with Emma, although we are bold enough to put Maria and her sufferings into the opposite scale; for a broken heart, and an early death, were the penalties she paid for her LOVE—and a WOMAN'S LOVE was her heaviest sin.

'To step aside is human,'

says Burns; and but few were better acquainted with the frailties 'which flesh is heir to,' than the woman-loving, and god-like hearted ploughman. We leave this page blank, for the beam shakes in our hand!



CHAPTER LIII.

"LAST SCENE OF ALL—
THAT ENDS THIS STRANGE EVENTFUL HISTORY!"
Shakspeare.

On the southern slope of the green hill side of the Norwood Cemetery, where the summer sunshine loves to sleep, and linger, as if loth to leave it, there stands a solitary white gravestone, bearing only the simple name of 'Maria.' The grave itself, in the spring-time of the year, is overgrown with primroses; and sometimes, on a very fine day, you may see a rough-looking good-natured sort of a fellow leaning with his elbow on the tombstone, smoking his cigar. It is Tom Grinder, who takes great pride in decorating that grave, and is well known at the public-house which overlooks the cemetery, at the window of which he sometimes sits for hours, collecting, as he says, ideas for a poem, to be entitled 'Maria;' and which, from the number of glasses of grog he has swallowed to inspire him, we should imagine is a very dry subject. Tom has long since known her whole history, and visits many of the public-houses around the neighbourhood, in which Godfrey and Maria sometimes halted to take refreshment, during their rural rambles; but there is a little white house—a beer-shop, at the corner of Penge-wood, with a beautiful garden before it, in the centre of which there stands a noble oak; and, although Tom well knows that they once took tea under the broad arms of that very tree, yet, somehow or another, he never visits the place. Tom says the prospect only calls up melancholy images; but those who know him, have whispered it abroad that it is because the landlord has not a license to sell spirits; for they well know how partial Tom is to a glass of good whiskey. But still he and Godfrey are excellent friends; and many an order on Godfrey's (now Squire Emmerson) banker, falls into Tom's hands.

A carriage, bearing on its panels, the arms of the Emmersons, of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, has been seen several times standing at the gates of the cemetery, and a fine, gentlemanly-looking young man has been observed to step out of it, and to stand for hours gazing on that gravestone, with his eyes rivetted on the name of 'Maria!' Sometimes he has taken Tom Grinder with him; and they have walked

together on the brow of the hill, where they have been noticed to stand for a length of time on one particular spot, which commands a distant view of London on the one hand, and on the other, looks wide and far across the beautiful counties of Kent, and Surrey. The last time that gentleman visited the cemetery, a very lovely lady accompanied him. They walked arm in arm to Maria's grave; and those who watched the strangers from the distant road, saw the gentleman stand for a long time with his head resting upon the tombstone, as though he were in deep trouble. Some say, they saw him stagger as if about to fall, and that the lady threw her arms around him, held him, and seemed to kiss him; but, what she said, no one was near enough to hear; that when the carriage drove away, the gentleman fell with his head upon the lady's bosom; that her arms encircled his neck; and, while her beautiful face bent over him, she looked as if she would have laid down her very life, if she could but have made him happy.

Once the lady came alone, and stood for nearly an hour beside that grave. What her thoughts might be, no one could tell; but it was observed that she knelt down beside the tombstone, and that when she returned to her carriage, there was such a look of Pity and Forgiveness beaming in her beautiful countenance, that the man who guards the gates of the cemetery, says "she looked just like an angel! —only, a great deal handsomer than any angel he had ever seen painted in a picture, though he had been a many times to the Dulwich Gallery."

Gregory Gruff, and the lady, with whom poor Maria lodged, have paid several visits to that grave; and it has been remarked by several, that from the moment Gregory entered those gates, his snuff-box was never once out of his hand; and, whether or not the snuff was stronger than common, it seemed to have a great effect upon his eyes, causing him to have continual recourse to his handkerchief; and although he could not always find it at the moment he felt in his pocket, he had never once been heard to swear, while within the boundaries of that 'Silent city of the Dead!'

We have heard it whispered that Maria's landlady is Squire Emmerson's mother! but this looks too much like romance to be true.— One thing, however, is certain:—Godfrey Malvern and his wife are very fond of her, and the child calls her 'granny.' As for Gregory Gruff, he is constantly dangling at the old lady's heels, although Parson Preedom, in his jocular moments, bids him 'beware of widows!' but

Gruff only smiles, and says, "She has not had four husbands, like my former wife; and what is to be, will be!" Emma came into the hall one day laughing, and said, she had seen Gregory with his arms around the old lady's neck; at which tidings, her husband, the squire, was noticed to smile,—for the first time since the death of Maria.

Sometimes Gregory meets the quondam Mrs. Gruff and her husband, in the village of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, and never fails to take off his hat on such memorable occasions; and, although Mrs. Copley, alias Gruff, does curtsey, there is something so stiff and formal about the manner, that it reminds you of a Doric column just sinking, by way of condescension, an inch or two into its base. As for Copley, he always shakes hands with Gruff; and has an odd knack sometimes of winking his eye, when he says, "Wish I was in the travelling stationery again! Dev'lish dear bargain—that taking back my wife! Forced to pack up my things two or three times a-day, and threaten to be off for America! She's always saying how kind you were! You've spoilt her!—you have, indeed! More quarrelling and making it up than ever! Shall leave her to you, if she does not alter in another week or two! Paid dear for my annuity!"

Hopkins is now steward to Squire Emmerson: that beautiful house at the corner of the park is his residence. You may sometimes see an old woman taking out his children for a walk, along the banks of the river, or among the shady pathways which lead through the wood.—That old woman is Bill's mother-in-law. As for Bill himself, after being scouted by all his former companions, and having neither talent enough to live by his wits, nor industry sufficient to procure his livelihood by honesty, and having sunk himself so low that he became assistant to a pot-boy,—no marvel that he grew moody and thoughtful, sat in the empty tap-room alone for hours together, sometimes brooding over the old newspapers, or sleeping, with his head on the table, amid the ashes of tobacco and the half-dried sticky traces of porter. He led this life for months; and still feeling the same disinclination to work, the thought one day struck him, that the only way to live in idleness all the days of his life, and be well provided for by the government of the country, was, to purchase a pistol, and fire at the first man of distinction he could meet with in the street. His plan succeeded just as he wished it: he wounded a most worthy man, whom he had never before seen in his life, was tried, brought in insane, and, instead of being sent to one of the penal settlements, to end his days in hard labour, as he deserved to do, he is living very comfortably in an asylum

near London, amongst many others, who, like himself, laugh at the laws which consign honesty and poverty to starvation and the workhouse, and leave scamps and idle scoundrels to revel in indolent comfort. We have heard that he is practising drawing; that he has made a sketch of twelve men, on whose shoulders he has placed the heads of asses, all peeping over a briery and prickly fence into a clover-field, in the centre of which he has placed a tolerable likeness of himself, lying down and kicking up his heels, and 'laughing like mad.' Some aver that he has attempted the portrait of a graver personage, to whom he is extending his fingers in the form of an open fan, the end of his thumb resting on the tip of his nose. We have not yet seen the sketch.

Dark Dick and Arabella are married, and are now the occupiers of a large coal-shed and green-grocery establishment on the Greenwich road, where you see a notice announcing that 'Vans are lent on hire by the hour, and Goods removed to any part of the Country.' There are no horses in the neighbourhood equal to Dick's; and he prides himself on the quality of the potatoes which he sells. A young woman sometimes serves in the shed; and you may frequently see a little dirty boy, either pelting coals at the horses as they pass, putting the potatoes in the scales, biting holes in the carrots or turnips, or crying to ride in the vans when they go out. That young woman is poor Jane: the little dirty boy, her child. Dick is very fond of him; gives him drops of gin; and learns him to drink out of great quart pewter pots of porter; and tells him he shall drive the vans when he gets a little older. Arabella is as kind to Jane, as if she were her own sister!—Sophia is dead. As for Starlight Sam, he is Dark Dick's head man, and is always very ready to lend poor Jane a helping hand, and very fond of taking the little boy with him, for a ride, when he goes out with the vans. Some say he will marry Jane.

Mary still lives with Mrs. Copley, alias Gruff: they are so used to one another's ways, that it would be a great pity ever to separate them. As for Cinderella, she is Emma's head nurse; and George Monk, of the borough, who has published a volume of readable poetry, under the patronage of Godfrey, and who (though no poet), is really a most respectable young fellow, is often seen by the side of Cinderella, when she takes out little Godfrey for a walk in the park. She has grown a very interesting and pretty young woman; and, under the tuition of Emma, has been broken off from using such vile Cockneyisms as 'warmint,' 'winegar,' and 'wery,' and an hundred other similar phrases, which are common to the lower orders of London.

Neither Betty nor Nanny were long inmates of the workhouse, after they had been visited by Parson Preedom and the lawyer, previous to Godfrey coming into the possession of his estate. Godfrey bought the lease of a little cottage, near Camberwell: Parson Preedom furnished it; and every quarter-day, the two dear old creatures may be seen toddling together up Lombard-street, about twelve o'clock, where they receive twenty pounds. The money is Betty's, but Nanny is purse-bearer; she receives and pays away everything; and on this side of the grave they will never want for either 'tea, or sugar, or a bit of snuff.' They still go to the old house near Holborn, for their snuff; for Betty says 'she can get none in London like it.' The snuff is now known only as 'Gregory Gruff's Snuff;' the lawyers around the neighbourhood of Lincoln's-Inn Fields seldom ask for it under any other name, although it was formerly called 'Cuba.'

The Mr. Pashley, of Clifford-Inn, is supposed to have been the brother of the lady with whom Maria lodged. A handsome monument is erected to his memory in the church-yard of Sutton-cum-Bottesford. The drawings he left behind are framed and glazed, and hung in the hall-parlour.

The schoolmaster to whom Godfrey acted as usher, has given up his school, and now resides with Parson Preedom and his niece. The old men have turned Naturalists, and are often seen about the neighbourhood, with nets, and books, and little boxes. Neither a butterfly, nor a bird is safe, when they are out together: they are eternally poking into banks, and peeping under hedges, and talking about Gilbert White, of Selborne, and Gilpin, who wrote a work entitled 'Forest Scenery.'—And Squire Emmerson frequently leaves his study to join them; and sometimes Emma throws on her bonnet, and takes little Godfrey with her, who will run until his little legs ache, with his cap in his hand, 'to tatch' as he says, 'a butterfy for Dandad Peedom.'

Godfrey is also Member for the Borough of Buttervote; and as he is not the man to say, 'Aye, or No,' at the bidding of any party-leader in the House, he finds quite enough to do. There are two objects to which he is bending all his energies to accomplish; and neither party nor place will ever change a resolution like his, founded upon, what he believes to be, Right and Justice! These are:—an alteration in the Corn and Poor Laws; towards the latter of which his attention was drawn by the privations which he knew poor old Betty had to endure in the Union Workhouse.

The Old Brown Cow has undergone a great change: it is now called

the 'Emmerson's Arms.' Post-boys, in blue or scarlet jackets, may be seen loitering about the new front, with its pillared entrance; and as for Mrs. Tomlinson, she wears a turban, keeps a bar-maid with long curls, and a waiter, who wears a white neckerchief; and, instead of walking into the comfortable old sanded-parlour, you are now shown into a splendid apartment, where you tread upon a Turkey-carpet, look into a big mirror, and sit down in the 'Coffee Room,' where no one is allowed to smoke. The old farmers have cut the place, and gone to the Blue Bell, where they often sit, and over their pipes recal the good dinner they had on the day they elected Squire Emmerson, the schoolmaster of Sutton-cum-Bottesford. The school itself, is now under the sole management of Emma and Gregory Gruff; and Gruff is just as obstinate as ever, and still insists upon it, that his are the only original, and right notions which can ever advance EDUCATION!

At the request of his wife, Squire Emmerson has sat for his portrait to Maclise, who has also painted Emma's: both the pictures are admirable likenesses, and look the 'very life.' There is also another portrait, executed by the same talented artist: it is life size, and was copied from a miniature. You might fancy it was Maria about to speak to you. The beautiful lips are apart, and seem about to move: the long sable ringlets have such a flow and freedom about them, that you fancy you could place your finger within the centre of each separate curl. The symmetry of the neck and throat is perfection itself. Somehow that portrait seems to carry the eye off Emma's: there is more majesty about the countenance—more passion! it looks as if it would die for you, if it loved you. There is something about the mouth which we cannot describe: we never saw but one mouth like it—look at it, on either side, or the front, and it seems to say, 'Come kiss me.'

Both portraits are hung in the Squire's study: they front him while he sits at his writing-desk, for he still enacts the part of Author; and now that he is rich, his works seem to attract more attention than they ever did, though there are good judges who say that they are much inferior to his earlier productions. Sometimes he throws aside his pen, and sits gazing on the portrait of Maria, as if he were utterly unconscious of everything around him. More than once, Emma has stolen in upon him, during these reveries, unobserved; then gone away, without ever apprising him of her presence, and remained a long time alone in her chamber. Still, she loves her husband almost to idolatry! although she knows half his heart is in the grave with Maria. On the

anniversary of Maria's death, the Squire never leaves his study; neither does he partake of a mouthful of food, but sits all day long, in the same suit of mourning, which he wore, when he followed her to the grave. He loved her living—loves her dead!

> And many, when they read this tale,
> And think of her—the loved—the frail,
> 'Will whisper low, and look more pale.'

May angels hover around thy green resting-place, Maria! Thou hast found peace at last, and sleepest out thy long sleep, with thy baby at thy cold white breast! Godfrey's arms can never more encircle thee, my Maria! Strange faces sit at the window now, where thou wert wont to sit, and watch hour by hour for his coming! Other steps are on those stairs, Maria:—other hands withdraw that latch! The places thou didst know, have forgotten thee!

> 'Oh! thou art very mild and meek;
> Though one should smite thee on the cheek,
> Or on the mouth, thou couldst not speak.'
>
> TENNYSON'S *Two Voices.*

But Squire Emmerson can never forget thee, Maria! for oft, in the still night, when the pale moonbeams fall, wan and white, on his pillow, he turneth away his face from his own fond Emma, and, folding his arms upon his breast, thinketh of thee, thy early death, and thy ill-requited love, Maria! And sometimes his deep sobbing awakens Emma; and although she speaketh low, and offereth comfort, and in her arms he sigheth himself to sleep, still his dreams are of thee and thine, Maria! Dearly as he loves Emma, there is an aching void within his heart—a desolate space, which has never been filled up since thou wert within thy grave; and there sorrow moans to herself, and in that wilderness of the heart, is ever heard a low voice, calling for thee, Maria! He would give up the wide domains of Sutton-cum-Bottesford, and slave at his desk until the grey twilight of death settled upon his eyelids, if he could but recal thee from the dead, Maria!

> 'For neither hail, nor rain, nor thunder,
> Can wholly do away, I ween,
> The marks of that which once hath been.'

There is something very strange and mysterious even in the very contemplation of death! it awakens thoughts unlike any other thoughts. We never felt this more fully, than we did a few months ago, when, in our wanderings through London, we halted before the Church of St. Clements the Dane, in the Strand, and paused to look

upon the human skeletons, numberless, which had been dug up, and were exposed to the 'vulgar-gaze,' 'naked and undismayed,' in the open street. 'It was a sorry sight!' Those who were living half a century ago, were 'unurned,' and their remains tossed up, with the common earth, which the brawny labourers threw out in spadefuls, alternately a skull, and a clod. We turned round and looked upon the gathered crowd, who, like ourselves, stood gazing on the scene. We knew only our own thoughts:—their thoughts we could not know, although every countenance around us wore a solemn look. Our imagination strided over another century: we pictured a similar crowd gazing, an hundred years hence, upon another such a scene—the bones, our bones; Tory, Whig, Radical, Chartist, Anti-Corn-Lawists, Godfreys, Emmas, Marias, Ingledews, Hopkins, Arabellas, Sophias, Bills, and Dark Dicks, all shovelled together into one common heap!—no distinction! And we turned and looked upon the busy street, where each kept his circumspect distance; where the wealthy and the poor were passing each other; and we thought strange thoughts! Those bones had once been clothed fashionably; those skulls had carried themselves proudly; they had been tenanted by mind and thought; conveyed unmeaning compliments, and carried wisdom; and what were they now? We saw a labourer kicking them together with his foot; one skull seemed to turn round and grin at him, for his want of respect; but he, poor fellow, noticed it not:—he bore it no ill will. And there they lay heaped one upon another: who they were, or what they were, no one could tell. Death seemed to have kicked them together into one vast unmeaning heap; and we almost fancied that we saw the grim, unerring, busy old Leveller standing with his fleshless foot, in triumph, upon those 'frail memorials;' and his hollow sepulchral voice seemed ringing in our ears, as we turned away, just as he began to exclaim, "Ladies and gentlemen, when you have all done with your Drapers, and Tailors, and Milliners, you will be kind enough to visit the Show Rooms of Death!—these are my patterns!" A mingled pile of skulls and bones happened to slip down at that moment, and we went on our way—as we do now—without any feeling of Pride.

THE END.

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